WILLIAM JONES AND THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY IN THE WAR OF 1812

By

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For Linda

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In citing manuscript materials the following abbreviations have been employed for the collections:

A/C . . . Annals of the Congress of the United States

ASP . . . American State Papers

JMP . . . James Madison Papers

lrc . . . Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Captains

lrcm . . . Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanders

lrm . . . Miscellaneous Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy

lro . . . Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Officers below the Rank of Commander

lsc . . . Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Commandants and Navy Agents

lsm . . . Miscellaneous Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy

lso . . . Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Officers

UCSC . . . Uselma Clark Smith Collection of the Papers of William Jones

INTRODUCTION

By 1812 the European world had been at war for almost two decades. England and France and their allies battled with a desperation unknown since the bloody religious wars of the seventeenth century. Each side regarded as enemies all who were not actively engaged on their side. It almost has become trite to refer to this as a struggle between a mammoth and a whale or the tiger and the shark. Yet this was the manner in which the world was divided. France seemed supreme on land while England appeared invincible on the seas.

The very existence of the United States insured its involvement in this war. To be sure, non-intercourse acts, an embargo, and the naive Macon bills were attempts to steer the United States away from the precipice. Neither France nor England seemed anxious to concede to the young nation the rights of a neutral. Both insisted that any participation in the commerce of the world would have to be on their own terms, not those insisted upon by the United States. America replied that, as a neutral, she had the right to carry

her non-contraband trade wherever the market was good. Tensions grew, the national honor was threatened, old grievances were remembered, and America fell into the rushing eddies which would draw it over the falls.[1]

The United States was an agricultural country of 7,700,000 people in 1812.[2] It chose to challenge a highly industrialized, commercial nation with a population of more than 18,367,000* people.[3] To say the least, the United States was not prepared to fight. A dissident population in many of the states challenged the country's right to go to war. The total number of men in the army was less than 10,000. Its navy was rotting because a pacific President and a frugal Secretary of the Navy had refused to spend money on maintaining or improving it.

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1. The Anglo-American diplomacy of this period has been well studied by Bradford Perkins in Prologue to War; England and the United States, 1805-1812 (Berkeley, Calif., 1961). One also cannot afford to overlook A. L. Burt, The United States, Great Britain, and British North America from the Revolution to the Establishment of Peace after the War of 1812 (New Haven, Conn., 1940). Unfortunately, no equally competent handling of Franco-American relations during this period exists.

2. United States Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, 1960), p. 7.

3. B. R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Cambridge, 1962), p.8.

*Includes England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

When war did come, the United States' greatest advantage was its natural defensive position. Because the nation was still primarily agricultural, it could support its population without external commerce and without expensive luxuries. Furthermore, the distance separating it from Great Britain made it difficult for the English to keep armies in America. The most important advantage America had was its very primitiveness. British armies could seize the national capital, capture forts on the Great Lakes frontier, and blockade its ports without seriously hampering America's ability to fight. There were no vital arteries in the United States, and even the more important veins could be severed without seriously affecting the nation's ability to wage the war. Another important advantage was England's lack of a bellicose spirit toward the United States. Almost twenty years of warfare had inured the people of Great Britain to sacrifices as long as the scourge of the western world, Napoleon, still ruled in France. The Emperor's collapse in 1814 made the English anxious to regain the elusive peacetime prosperity. Furthermore, His Majesty's government was having a difficult time trying to parcel out the Continent from Vienna. An American war failed to interest British statesmen. These

advantages developed during the struggle so that, after two and a half years, the supreme power of Europe was willing to sign a treaty of peace with her former colonies who had dared to challenge her for the second time.

When all things are considered, the United States did not perform badly in the war. Most of the military glory was won by the navy. Unlike its land partner, the United States Navy was never disgraced by any humiliating fiascos. To be sure, vessels were lost, but they went down with all their guns blazing, and the navy was so proud of the spirit of one of her defeated commanders that it turned his dying words into its motto. Single frigates defeated English vessels in detail on the ocean, while on the northern frontier, it was the navy which saved the nation from the British army in Canada. Naval officers and men seemed to be everywhere and when their ships were locked in port by the blockade, they served as soldiers, artillerists, and artificers on land. Through such actions, the nation's small navy provided most of the martial glory and none of the shame.

Historians of this period have almost entirely ignored the organization and the administration of the navy. And no serious studies have been published on the Secretary of the Navy, a Cabinet-level officer, and his influence over

the department in a time of national emergency. Therefore, the present study examines the navy from an administrative viewpoint in order to shed light on how the naval successes of the United States were coordinated and organized at the Cabinet level. Special emphasis is placed on the man who headed the department, William Jones. The study essentially deals with how he affected the nation's naval policies through his handling of the men, ships, and strategy from his Washington office. It will be possible to determine if the bureaucratic organization on the national level was important in assuring the navy's continuing victories throughout the war.

CHAPTER I

THE GROWTH OF A NAVY

The department which William Jones received in 1813 as the fourth Secretary of the Navy was the result of no organized planning, research, or design. In the decade and a half since the young nation had established the bureau, the navy had been ignored except during acute maritime crises, and then easily forgotten when these moments had passed. A cabinet officer commanded the department, but the extent of his control had not yet been determined. He was to be the administration's spokesman on naval affairs, but, at the same time, the chief advocate for the naval officers. Although the navy of this era was small, the Secretary's work was enormous since he was the only direct link between the officers and any other official--executive or legislative. He was responsible for maintaining an efficient organization, but was not given either the professional or secretarial help needed to do a good job.

In 1789 the United States had no more than the potential for a navy. Forced to create everything anew, the Federalist administrations would establish traditions and precedents that would bear upon all future decisions. This had to be done in the case of the navy. Those vessels employed by the nation during the war for Independence had either succumbed to age or had been returned to the states which had owned them. The infant country had more pressing problems than the establishment of a navy. Congress delayed consideration of the naval force until an economic base had been established to support it, and an army had been created to suppress the more immediate Indian threat on the frontiers. Only after these problems had been met would the nation be able to carry the additional financial burden of a navy.

The initial cause for serious consideration of a navy was renewed excursions by the Algerine pirates in the Mediterranean. The depredations upon the United States began when word reached the pirate nation that the United States was no longer an English colony. This was followed by a peace treaty between Portugal and Algiers, and the latter was free to send its corsairs into the Atlantic. Although support for the naval bill was strong in 1791, Congress was

not able to pass the measure for three years. Anti-Federalist Republicans in Congress opposed the creation of a navy as dangerous to the liberties of the people. In 1791, Senator William Maclay of Pennsylvania resisted the measure because he felt that ransoming the captive American sailors would be cheaper than a fleet and the cost of the latter would be an obnoxious burden upon the citizens of the United States.[1] For similar reasons, William B. Giles of Virginia called the founding of a navy "a dangerous matter." Representative Giles saw the impersonal power of taxation as capable of producing a feudal tyranny.[2]

The Third Congress, anxious to protect American rights in the Mediterranean, was so concerned with America's defense that it produced a plethora of military measures, passed it is true by narrow margins. The debate over the naval bill of 1794, which would create the United States' first navy, centered on five areas: economy, politics,

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1. William Maclay, The Journal of William Maclay (New York, 1927), pp. 371-372.

2. Quoted in Marshall Smelser, "Passage of the Naval Act of 1794," Military Affairs, XXII (Spring, 1958), 7.

strategy, diplomacy, and humanitarianism. An act passed only when a rider clause was attached stating that naval construction would be halted if peace were concluded between Algiers and the United States. Sectional alignments were important, and the bill was only approved because of the near unanimity of New England for the measure.[3]

Fortunately, the United States had decided that the six ships which would comprise its small navy would be the most powerful frigates of their class. Joshua Humphreys, a Philadelphia shipwright, is credited with designing them. On December 29, 1794, Henry Knox, who as Secretary of War was also in charge of naval matters, communicated to the House of Representatives the administration's requirements for the new vessels. He said,

> That the passing of the said act created an anxious solicitude that this second commencement of a navy for the United States should be worthy of their national character. That the vessels should combine such qualities of strength, durability, swiftness of sailing, and force, as to render them equal, if not superior, to any frigates belonging to any of the European Powers. Researches, therefore, have been made for the best principles of construction, and such proportions adopted have appeared best, upon the most mature advice and deliberation.

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3. See Smelser, "Passage," pp. 1-12, and Smelser, The Congress Founds the Navy, 1787-1798 (Notre Dame, Ind., 1959), pp. 48-63.

> The largest ships of forty-four guns, will be constructed upon a scale to contain thirty cannons of the caliber of four pounds upon the gun deck. The others, of thirty-six, twenty-eight cannons, of the same caliber, upon the gun deck. The remaining force will be made up of twelve pounders and brass howitzers.
>
> The frigates will be built of live oak and red cedar, in all parts where they can be used to the best advantage. These valuable woods afford the United States the highest advantages in building ships, the durability being estimated at five times that of common white oak. Besides these woods, the best white oak, pitch pine, and locust, are directed to be used in the construction.[4]

Under the 1794 statute, the six frigates included the three forty-four gun vessels: the United States to be built by Joshua Humphreys at Philadelphia, the Constitution by George Claghorn at Boston, and the President by Forman Cheesman in New York. The thirty-six gun frigates were the Constellation to be constructed at Baltimore by David Stodert, the Chesapeake by John Morgan at Norfolk, and the Congress by James Hackett at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The ships were built at several places, primarily to spread naval enthusiasm among as large a segment of the population as possible. In 1794, as in the twentieth century, defense contracts were let out primarily for

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4. United States Congress, American State Papers, Class VI, Naval Affairs (Washington, 1834), I, 6. Hereafter abbreviated as ASP.

political reasons.[5]

Unfortunately, for the naval enthusiasts of the period, within two years of the passage of the naval act the Dey of Algiers and the United States agreed upon peace terms. By law all construction on the vessels was to cease. Washington opposed complete cessation and convinced the Congress that the President, the Constitution, and the Constellation should be completed. In his last annual message to Congress on December 7, 1796, Washington told the assembly that the United States ought to agree to "the gradual creation of a Navy." The President continued,

> To an active external commerce, the protection of a naval force is indispensable. This is manifest with regard to wars in which a State is itself a party. But besides this, it is in our own experience that the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect for a neutral flag requires a naval force organized and ready to vindicate it from insult or aggression.[6]

John Adams, the second President of the United States, had been a naval enthusiast since the Revolutionary War.

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5. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 37-38.

6. James D. Richardson (ed.), A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1905 (Washington, 1903-1907), I, 201.

His greatest contribution to the establishment of a navy was his insistence that the country had to have a navy for "the protection of the commerce of the nation, the disruption of enemy commerce in the time of war, and the defense of the coast against seaborne attack."[7] He had always advocated American neutrality, but he clearly saw that the United States would, by necessity, be involved in any major European confrontation. The young nation's only hope in such an instance would be to command a force large enough to tip the balance of power. A United States Navy capable of controlling both the North Atlantic and the West Indies, Adams felt, would insure respectful recognition of this country by all the European powers. No nation at war with another would dare to challenge the United States' neutrality so long as her naval force could upset the balance against her.[8]

Adams' first chance to build a navy did not come until the United States had been attacked by France on the high

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7. Frederick H. Hayes, "John Adams and American Sea Power," American Neptune, XXV (January, 1965), 38.

8. Hayes, "John Adams," p. 38.

seas. In a rapid series of laws enacted in the summer of 1798, the Congress authorized the Executive to finish the outfitting of the six vessels begun by Washington's administration (March 17), to build, purchase or hire twelve additional twenty-two gun ships (April 27), to purchase or build ten galleys (May 4), to accept as gifts or loans twelve vessels from American communities (June 20), to build at least three more thirty-two gun frigates (July 16). Finally, on February 25, 1799, six seventy-four gun ships-of-the-line, six sloops-of-war, two drydocks, and $200,000 for timber were allotted to the administration.[9] This mass of legislation was the result of the war fever and panic which seized an unprepared nation. Once again, the war was to end before a navy began to be built, and most of the proposed ships remained on the drawing board.

As early as May 16, 1797, President Adams had said that "A naval power, next to the militia, is the natural defense of the United States. . . . Our seacoasts, from their great extent, are more easily annoyed and more easily defended by a naval force than any other. With

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9. K. Jack Bauer, "Naval Shipbuilding Programs, 1794-1860," Military Affairs, XXIX (Spring, 1965), 29-30.

all the materials our Country abounds; in skill our naval architects and navigators are equal to any, and commanders and seamen will not be wanting,"[10] One of the most important measures encouraged by the President was a bill to establish a navy department. By the slim majority of 47 to 41, the Senate passed "An Act to establish an Executive Department, to be denominated the Department of the Navy." This act was signed into law on April 20, 1798. The statute had five sections; it "(1) Established the Department with the Secretary at its head, and stated the naval duties. (2) Provided for the principal Clerk and other clerks. (3) Authorized the removal of the naval records from the Department of War. (4) Fixed the salary of the Secretary at three thousand dollars a year, and the salaries of the clerks at the same rate as those paid in the Treasury Department. (5) Divested the War Department of its hitherto existing naval powers."[11]

Adams' choice for Secretary of the new department was a fortunate one. Rather than choosing a professional naval

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10. Richardson, Compilation, I, 237.

11. Smelser, Congress, p. 156.

officer or a shipbuilder, the President picked a wealthy merchant from Maryland, Benjamin Stoddert. Through his private business, the Secretary had experience in personnel management, ship design, naval ordnance, supplying vessels, and the many other duties connected with running a fleet. Stoddert worked hard in his government position. One author credits him as being the man who was able to carry the department through the "Jefferson recession" and "on to greater days ahead."[12] By the end of his years with the Navy Department, Stoddert had established the precedent that the Secretary of the Navy was to be "in firm possession of a recognized authority over the whole naval establishment. . . . Power rested entirely with the Secretary, not only in the technical field of naval construction and equipment but also in the strategic and tactical control of naval operations."[13] Stoddert was a credit to the new nation, an administrator whose integrity and

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12. Robert G. Albion, "First Days of the Navy Department," Military Affairs, XII (Spring, 1948), 11.

13. Howard I. Chapelle, The History of the American Sailing Navy, the Ships and their Development (New York, 1949), p. 177.

judgment were never questioned by his contemporaries.

The naval war with France, usually called the "Quasi-war," was the first European challenge faced by the United States after independence. It was more due to a complicated series of misunderstandings than to any single, overt action. The United States, as one of the largest neutrals of the western world, predictably came into conflict with the two giants, England and France. Conceivably, the United States could have fought either nation, but the treaty with England in 1794 and the rupture of our diplomatic relations with France made the latter the administration's designated enemy.

The 45-ship American Navy captured the extraordinary number of 87 French merchantment and 21 naval vessels during the war.[14] Captain Thomas Truxtun's account of the battle between the United States frigate Constellation and the French ship, L'Insurgence, is an example of the uncommon valor which the United States naval officers displayed during the war.[15] An early authority on the Quasi-war

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14. Robert W. Neeser (ed.), Statistical and Chronological History of the United States Navy: 1775-1907 (New York, 1909), II, 32-35, & 290-293.

15. See ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 72-73.

judged that "six millions [of dollars] may be taken as a fair estimate of the actual expense of protecting American commerce against French depredation." This can be compared to the "more than twenty-two million dollars" of revenue received from imposts during the period. "Unquestionably a very large portion of this profitable trade would have been discouraged through fear or lost by spoliation, had it not been for naval protection."[16]

The privateer fleet with 365 vessels was much larger than the navy. Since most of these vessels were merchantmen armed for defense, their captures were few. Typical of the private aid which the nation received was that which came from Salem, Massachusetts. Salem had found both the English and French commerce so profitable that it was willing to take any risks to deal with these nations. Even after active hostilities had begun, it continued its overseas trade, but convoyed its small fleets with armed privateers. Salem's merchants subscribed over $50,000 to build a thirty-two gun frigate (the Essex) which was given

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16. Gardner W. Allen, Our Naval War with France (Boston, 1909), pp. 222-223.

to the United States. The French restrictions on American trade to the West Indies seemed to be the principal factor which convinced Salem that a war would be necessary to reopen this profitable commerce.[17]

President Adams sent William Vans Murray to France in the spring of 1799, and the two nations were able to agree to end the hostilities. The end of the French war caused a cutback in naval expenditures. On November 27, 1800, President Adams reminded the House of Representatives that, "a navy, well organized, must constitute the natural and efficient defense of this country against all foreign hostility."[18] Adams' naval program, which he hoped to will to the nation, included programs along three lines: "ships, personnel, and a supporting organization of yards and docks."[19] On January 12, 1801, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert suggested that Congress appropriate enough

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17. See James D. Phillips, "Salem's Part in the Naval War with France," New England Quarterly, XVI (December, 1943), 543-566.

18. Richardson, Compilation, I, 312.

19. Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, N. J., 1939), p. 50.

money to keep thirteen United States frigates in a state of action or, at least, in ready reserve. The Secretary said,

> Thus then it appears that, for the small sum of six hundred and fifty-one thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven dollars thirty-four cents, the United States may keep in constant service six frigates; seven others in port, but always ready for service; the corps of marines, consisting of more than eleven hundred officers and men, and may remunerate the past, and secure the future, services of a meritorious class of men, who, in general, either sacrificed more profitable and less hazardous private employment, to donate themselves to their country, in a season of peril; or who, being qualified by education for any pursuits, have entered the navy, as a profession, at that time of life when professions are usually chosen.[20]

The Secretary said that six seventy-four gun ships-of-the-line should be built, with more added annually. Furthermore, the nation ought to buy timber stands and drydocks or shipyards to store naval supplies and to repair vessels. In conclusion, Stoddert provided a succinct summary of Adams' naval policy.

> In a pecuniary point of view, there can be no comparison between the expense of creating a sufficient navy and the loss of commerce, so great as ours, will too certainly sustain for the want of such protection. But the loss of property is but a paltry consideration, compared with all the

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20. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 75.

> humiliating and destructive consequences which must flow from that debasement of mind which a system of eternal submission to injury and injustice cannot fail to produce.[21]

Thomas Jefferson's election to the Presidency was seen as a blow to the American naval establishment. The new President's republican sympathies were well known and few believed that he would undertake a war with England or France. Jefferson, however, was not anti-navy by principle for, as early as 1781 in his Notes on Virginia, he had written,

> To aim at such a navy as the greater nations of Europe possess, would be a foolish and wicked waste of the energies of our countrymen. ... They can attack us by detachment only; and it will suffice to make ourselves equal to what they may detach. Even a smaller force than they may detach will be rendered equal or superior by the quickness with which any check may be repaired with us, while losses with them will be irreparable till too late. A small naval force then is sufficient for us, and a small one is necessary.[22]

President Jefferson appointed Robert Smith, a Maryland commercial fleet owner, as his Secretary of the Navy. Smith, a member of the pro-navy branch of the Republican Party, was a fortunate choice. He "rendered himself justly

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21. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 75.

22. Quoted in Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power, p. 14.

popular with the service," and "continued for the long space of nine years to serve its interests with zeal and intelligence, and who has left behind him, in the hearts of all who then composed the navy, a feeling that while their interests were in his care, they were intrusted to one well disposed to serve the country and themselves."[23] Smith's administration, however, was tarnished by scandal. The Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, revealed that "Robert Smith had allowed his brother's firm to use government money in amounts up to $200,000, reimbursement to be made at the pleasure of the firm."[24] Although the money was quickly repaid, Gallatin had made himself two inveterate enemies--the influential Smith brothers of Maryland.

Unfortunately for Jefferson, the United States was confronted with a determined force of pirates from the North African maritime nations of Algiers, Tripoli, and Morocco. Ever since the United States had negotiated a

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23. James Fenimore Cooper, The History of the Navy of the United States of America (Philadelphia, 1839), I, 337.

24. Peter R. Nielson, "Financial History of the United States, 1811-1816," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Catholic University of America, 1926), p. 25.

treaty with Algiers in 1795, the Barbary states had been very unhappy. The pirate princes realized that their main source of income came from capturing ships. The tribute monies from the large European powers had to be accepted since these nations had such powerful navies. The United States, however, had no blue water navy of consequence, and its commerce was large. The treaty with Algiers included two sloops which became the envy of Morocco and Tripoli. While Algiers remained at peace, the other two powers chopped down the flagpoles in front of the American consulates as the traditional Berber declaration of war. The United States quickly subdued Morocco, but the war with Tripoli was to be a long, costly affair.

President Jefferson was never a man to truck with pirates. As early as 1786, while he was United States minister to France, the future President wrote, "If it be admitted, however, that war, on the fairest prospects, is still exposed to uncertainties, I weigh against this, the greater uncertainty of the duration of a peace bought with money, from such a people ... and by a nation, who, on the hypothesis of buying peace, is to have no power on the sea,

to enforce an observance of it."[25] Jefferson had not changed his mind by 1801 and decided to end the payment of American tribute to the pirate powers. On February 6, 1802, the Congress gave Jefferson power to use the navy "as he saw fit to protect American commerce and seamen and to commission privateers."[26] By this virtual declaration of war, the United States became involved in an embroglio that did not end until 1815 when a peace without price was forced upon Tripoli and Algiers. Even Jefferson had not been successful in enforcing a favorable peace on the Barbary states, and, in 1805, was willing to pay a small amount of tribute to Tripoli for peace with that nation.

The Barbary War was not without its glory. Few American wars have seen a greater military march than the one led by William Eaton and eleven marines across the North African desert from Alexandria to Derna. Few American sailors showed more bravery than those who sailed two small (50-75 feet) gunboats across the Atlantic. Few men have taken the risks which Stephen Decatur, Jr., assumed in blowing up the Philadelphia, under the enemy's guns. And few had

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25. Quoted in Glenn Tucker, Dawn Like Thunder: the Barbary Wars and the Birth of the United States Navy (New York, 1963), p. 58.

26. Tucker, Dawn Like Thunder, p. 146.

sacrificed themselves in the way Daniel Fraser had by placing his head between a scimiter and Captain Decatur. Typical of this uncommon valor was the action of August 3, 1804, which was communicated to Secretary Smith by Commodore Edward Preble. During the heavy action of this afternoon,

> Lieutenant Trippe of the Vixen, in[gunboat] no. 6, ran along side of one of the enemy's large boats, which he boarded with only Midshipman John Henley and nine men, his boat falling off before any more could get on board; thus was he left, compelled to conquer or perish, with the odds of thirty-six to eleven. The Turks [i.e. the Tripolitans] could not withstand the ardor of this brave officer and his assistants; in a few minutes the decks were cleared, and her colors hauled down. On board of this boat fourteen of the enemy were killed, and twenty-two made prisoners, seven of which were badly wounded. The rest of their boats retreated within the rocks. Lieutenant Trippe received eleven sabre wounds, some of which are very severe: he speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Henley, and those who followed him.[27]

One of the most fascinating aspects of United States naval history is Jefferson's gunboat navy. The idea of a completely defensive navy was not new with Jefferson. Gunboats were common among European nations for harbor defense. Jefferson, however, hoped to be able to get along with a large number of gunboats (eventually 177 of these craft

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27. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 134.

were built) in place of a blue water navy which was to be kept in storage until it had rotted. Although none of the American gunboats had arrived in the Mediterranean in time for active service, the American naval force had used European gunboats in the shallow coastal waters off North Africa. With the temporary cessation of the Barbary conflict, Jefferson was able to bring home the frigates and prepare for a peacetime naval establishment. In his message to Congress on February 10, 1807, the President presented his four-part naval program. It was to include:

> 1. Land batteries, furnished with heavy cannon and mortars, and established on all points around the place favorable from preventing vessels from lying before it. 2. Moveable Artillery which may be carried, as occasion may require, to points unprovided with fixed batteries. 3. Floating batteries; and, 4. gunboats, which may oppose an enemy at his entrance, and co-operate with the batteries for his expulsion.[28]

The President felt he should present corroborating evidence on the feasibility and effectiveness of the gunboats, and, therefore, communicated the favorable opinions of General James Wilkinson, Captain Samuel Barron, and Captain Thomas Tingey, the Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard.

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28. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 163.

Captain Tingey best summarized the dubious advantages.

> The efficiency of gunboats in the defense of coasts, ports, and harbors, must be obvious to every person capable of reflection, when it is considered with what celerity they can generally change their position and mode of attack, extending it widely to as many different directions as their number consists of, or concentrating nearly to one line of direction. It hardly need be observed that the very small object which a gunboat presents to the attacking enemy, causes it always [to be] problematical whether it may be hit by the most expert and experienced marksmen, while, on the other hand, the enemy attacking is generally with large ships, mostly of the line of battle, and which, from their magnitude, may be struck by almost every shot. The advantages of gunboats, for the defence contemplated, are numerous. They cannot easily be surrounded, be the force of the enemy what it may; consequently, very few, if any, are likely to fall into the enemy's hands. Their capability of retiring into shoal waters, thereby keeping the adversary at long gun-shot distance, where naught but a charge of single round shot will reach, in which they will almost always have the advantage, or taking their station behind shoals, where they cannot be pursued by the smallest class of frigates, or even of sloops of war; and in many cases they have the opportunity of annoying an enemy when sheltered themselves by low points of land, where nothing but their masts can be seen, of course in a situation comparatively safe when that of the enemy is considered.[29]

Virtually every inlet and harbor was to have one of the gunboats for defense, as were many of the river and lakeside cities. Eventually 177 of these defensive vessels

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29. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 163.

were built. Because they were constructed in many ports by different contractors, they varied greatly in size. They were between 50 and 70 feet long and carried a single carronade in the bow. Sails or oars were used for propulsion, and, although in rough weather, the gun had to be stored below deck, they were good, sea-worthy vessels.[30]

Jefferson's naval policy was nowhere as disastrous as many authors have claimed. The President was, at least, willing to fight for principles which he considered necessary to the nation's integrity. Furthermore, Jefferson pushed an active naval policy even though it depended primarily upon the undersized gunboat fleet. As Jefferson himself observed, the naval measures proposed by his administration could hardly ever "become an excitement [sic] to engage in offensive maritime war, towards which it would furnish no means."[31] Even with all his efforts to maintain only a defensive force, the United States on November 30, 1807, could count four frigates in service or ready to serve, and seven more needing repairs; to this could be added ten sloops in service and 68 gunboats.

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30. Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, pp. 189-241.

31. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 163.

James Madison was elected the fourth President in 1808. He sought a man for his Secretary of the Navy who would be equally as capable as Robert Smith had been. The position went to Paul Hamilton, a South Carolina planter and politician who had been comptroller (1800-1804) and governor (1804-1806) of his state.[32] He had no background for his new appointment, and it is a mystery why he was ever chosen. Hamilton's first three years were noticeably uneventful. The new Secretary "insisted upon economy in naval expenditures, a scrupulous regard for the letter of the law, a conscientious attention to duty on the part of the higher naval officers, and correct habits for the midshipmen."[33]

As America's relations deteriorated with the British, it became obvious that a man more knowledgeable in naval affairs would be necessary for the post. With the declaration of war on June 18, 1812, "there was demanded of the

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32. John G. VanDeusen, "Paul Hamilton," Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1928), VIII, 189-190.

33. Charles O. Paullin, "Naval Administration Under Secretaries of the Navy Smith, Hamilton and Jones, 1801-1814," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, XXXII (December, 1906), 1306.

naval secretary decision, initiative, activity, expert knowledge, and skill in the handling of details, [and] Hamilton fell short of the requirements of his position."[34] Hamilton was aware of his shortcomings and wrote to the naval captains in the spring of 1812 to gather their opinions on what strategy the United States should follow in the event of war with England. Almost with unanimity, the captains replied that single ship cruises would be the best way to harass the enemy's commerce, attack his naval vessels, and protect the United States.

The United States Navy had deteriorated since the Barbary War. In addition to the 177 gunboats built by Jefferson and Madison (102 of these were being repaired in 1812), the nation had but eighteen vessels. Three of these had been built before 1801 and were in need of repair. Of the remaining fifteen, seven were frigates with a total of 254 guns, originally built under the Washington or Adams

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34. Paullin, "Naval," pp. 1307-1308. The historiography on the cause of the war is a long one. See Reginald Horsman, The Causes of the War of 1812 (Philadelphia, 1962); Bradford Perkins (ed.), The Causes of the War of 1812: National Honor or National Interest?, American Problem Studies series (New York, 1962); and George R. Taylor (ed.), The War of 1812: Past Justifications and Present Interpretations, Problems in American Civilization series (Englewood, N.J., 1963).

administration. There were also eight brigs carrying 122 guns which had been built or purchased by Jefferson or Madison.[35] Compared to this small force, the English Navy on December 7, 1812, had 97 vessels on the American station of which six were line ships and 33 were frigates.[36] In all, England had over one thousand vessels of war which amounted to "three fighting ships for every American gun."[37]

The United States had commenced a war with the major sea power in the world. Secretary Hamilton agreed with the chief clerk of the department, Charles W. Goldsborough, that the navy should be laid up during the war rather than be permitted to fight. The naval captains, however, argued for permission to wage open sea warfare, and it was only when the President agreed with the officers that the possibility of a non-naval war was abandoned.[38]

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35. Paullin, "Naval," p. 1318.

36. Theodore Roosevelt, "The War with the United States," Chapter XLI of William Clowes, et al., The Royal Navy: A History from Earliest Times to the Present (London, 1901), VII, 25.

37. Irving Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, 1812-1836 (Indianapolis, 1961), p. 39. Vol. VI of James Madison.

38. Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, p. 39.

War came and the American navy went to sea. Most captains chose to sail on single-ship cruises looking for enemy warships to fight or merchantmen to plunder. Commodore John Rodgers commanded a five-vessel squadron which made a seventy-day cruise on which not a single English warship was sighted. He took only seven merchantmen as prizes and his lack of success seemed to confirm the opinion of the other captains that single-ship cruises were more effective than squadron sailings. Rodgers' actions, however, brought large benefits to the nation. The British had learned of the squadron and combined their Atlantic vessels to search for him. This permitted many American merchantmen to slip into their home ports. Other officers were luckier than Rodgers during the first six months of the war. During the same time they won a number of important single-ship actions. Among these were the Constitution's capture of the Guerriere (August 19), the capture of the Macedonian by the United States (October 25), the loss of the Java to the Constitution (December 29), the Essex's victory over the Alert (August 3), and the capture of the Frolic by the Wasp (October 18). In all, nine engagements were fought in 1812, five of them American

victories.[39]

Even though the navy was doing exceptionally well, the cares of office weighed heavily upon the Secretary. So long as there was peace, Hamilton's ineptness went unnoticed. War, however, made his shortcomings public knowledge, and as the press began to criticize naval policies in 1812, Hamilton sought comfort in the bottle. While there were indications that he drank heavily before the war, the added burdens of the conflict made the Secretary an alcoholic. "He was publically intoxicated at the naval ball on the Constellation and again at the 'Macedonian celebration.' ... For two years Hamilton had been incapable of working in the second half of the day."[40]

On December 29, 1812, the third Secretary of the Navy presented his letter of resignation. It was immediately accepted. War was more than the man was able to bear and

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39. The naval history of the War of 1812 has been told many times. The best scholarly account is still Theodore Roosevelt, The Naval War of 1812, 2 volumes (New York, 1906). The implications of the war on naval strategy are in Alfred T. Mahan, Sea Power in its Relation to the War of 1812, 2 volumes (London, 1905). A most exciting, well-written account, based on good historical sources, is Cecil S. Forester, The Age of Fighting Sail: The Story of the Naval War of 1812 (Garden City, N.Y., 1956).

40. Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, pp. 125-126.

his record leaves much to be desired. As the man chiefly responsible for naval organization, he did nothing to prepare the nation for war. True, his resources were small, but he made no attempt to increase them, and what little was done was mainly due to Congressional impetus. Upon leaving office, he asked Madison for a letter stating the President's opinion of him, and the generous chief executive replied, "I cannot satisfy my own feelings, or the tribute due to your patriotic merits and private virtues, without bearing testimony to the fervent zeal, the uniform exertions, and the unimpeachable integrity with which you have discharged that important trust, and without expressing the value I have always placed on that personal intercourse, the pleasure of which I am now to lose."[41]

President Madison had also received the resignation of the Secretary of War, William Eustis, at this time. Thus he now had to seek two military secretaries in the midst of a war. As Madison looked around for an experienced man--for he had learned a lesson from Paul Hamilton--he settled upon William Jones, a Philadelphia merchant, Congressman,

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41. (Philadelphia) General Aurora Advertiser, February 17, 1813.

sea captain, and loyal Republican. Jones had been offered the Navy Department by Jefferson in 1801 and had refused; now it was up to Madison to persuade him to accept the post. Jones himself had received word from Pennsylvania Congressman Jonathon Roberts that he would be offered the position as early as December 28, 1812. "The Nation and the Navy," Roberts said, "point to you as the fittest man we have and what is to become of us if the fittest man will not come forward in a moment of public danger."[42] Jones gave Madison's official offer, made on January 3, 1813, several days' thought before he accepted the department "with humility." His acceptance was conditioned by his request to be allowed a few days to settle private affairs before setting out for the seat of government.[43]

Those who knew Jones looked upon his appointment with approbation. Jacob J. Otto, a Philadelphia friend, wrote that, "I have long since thought that you ought to direct the Department, you would occupy, and your country should

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42. J. Roberts to W. Jones, December 28, 1812. Uselma Clark Smith Collection of the Papers of William Jones, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia. Hereafter abbreviated as UCSC.

43. W. Jones to J. Madison, January 14, 1813, UCSC.

rejoice that you have accepted the appointment."[44] Navy personnel also applauded. Here at last was a man who understood ships and the men who sailed them. Lieutenant George C. Reed, on board the frigate United States, exclaimed, "I see by the papers you are to be our secretary & permit me to say it is the best news not only to me but to all my profession, we have heard for some time."[45] The most impressive congratulations came from Jones' old friend, Captain William Bainbridge, who forwarded not only his compliments, but a warning as well.

> I could scarcely believe you would have been drawn into Public life knowing how little ambitious you are in that pursuit. Yet it was what I most wished believing that if you got at the high responsible station of head of the Navy Department it would be of infinite advantage to the naval establishment of our Country the increase of which in my opinion is essential to the welfare of our country. You mention the unorganized state of your department--we all know it--and without reflecting on the former head of it--(the last individual sincerely esteemed in the goodness of his heart) I can say there never was any system in it and for the want of which great abuses have crept in. And you will find my dear Sir that even with your capability and exertions, it will take some time before you can fully correct them.[46]

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44. J. Otto to W. Jones, January 28, 1813, UCSC.

45. G. Reed to W. Jones, January 10, 1813, UCSC.

46. W. Bainbridge to W. Jones, March 1, 1813, UCSC.

Because William Jones received the Navy Department in the midst of a war, he would be forced to keep the haphazard organization which had grown since the bureau's establishment. It was President Madison's hope, however, that a man as knowledgeable as Jones would be able to bring efficient administration to the unwieldy bureau. This confidence did not go unrewarded.

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM JONES

Little is known of the very early life of William Jones. He was born in Philadelphia either in 1760 or 1761. As a youth he was an apprentice at a boat building yard on the Lehigh River in the Moravian community of Bethlehem, about 60 miles north of Philadelphia.[1] During the American Revolution the lad served in a company of volunteers and fought in the battles of Trenton (December 26, 1776) and Princeton (January 3, 1777). Tiring of the land war, he went to sea on the private Pennsylvania vessel, St. James, captained by Thomas Truxtun. He was wounded and taken prisoner while serving in the Continental Navy, and, in 1781, was promoted to first lieutenant for gallantry.[2]

From 1790 to 1793 Jones resided in the southern port of Charleston where he was a merchant and active in the city's militia artillery battery. He was elected captain

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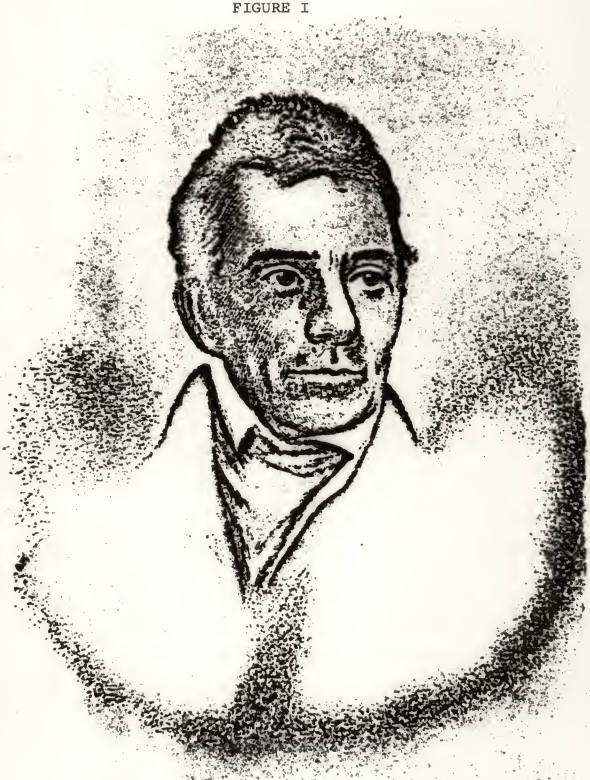
1. Joseph M. Levering, A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1741-1892 (Bethlehem, 1903), p. 653.

2. John H. Frederick, "William Jones," Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1928), X, 205.

FIGURE I



WILLIAM JONES

Source: Charles O. Paullin, "Naval Administration Under Secretaries of the Navy Smith, Hamilton, and Jones, 1801-1814," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, XXXII (December, 1906).

and wrote a manual for artillery drill.[3] Returning to Philadelphia in 1793, he became active in the Republican Party while prospering as a merchant in that city. He was elected to the Seventh Congress (March 4, 1801 - March 3, 1803). Shortly after leaving office, Jones wrote to his colleague, John Randolph, of his affection for the nation. "I am sick," he said, "of city (and I may say Lancaster) Republicanism but I do not despair of the Republic. There is solidarity in it, and the good sense of the real republicans will ultimately prevail." On January 18, 1805, he was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society and later read many papers before that body, including one on a lead casing for cannon shells. From 1805 to 1807 Jones sailed around the world on his ship, the Ploughboy. For a short time he was involved in the Chinese opium trade. After returning home, he was chosen by a Philadelphia town meeting in 1809 to present a letter of support to President Jefferson, assuring the chief executive of backing for the embargo and other restrictive laws.[4]

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3. Copy of this manual is located with his papers. November 1, 1794, UCSC.

4. W. Jones to J. Randolph, March 19, 1803; W. Jones to President, American Philosophical Society, March 22, 1811; W. Jones to J. Nicholson, September 3, 1805; W. Jones to T. Jefferson, February 3, 1809; UCSC.

In 1810 Jones was asked by the Secretary of State, Robert Smith, if he would assume the services of a charge d'affaires to Denmark. He replied that he did not have time to serve because of the press of his own private business. After consulting with President Madison, the Secretary of State told Jones that the position "at the Danish Court, does not require you to relinquish your present commercial establishment. The appointment is in substance that of a special Agent, and will necessarily be a temporary one." No letter remains on Jones' final answer, but all indications seem to be that he never filled the position.[5]

The Madison administration, however, appeared determined to get Jones into an office of some type. On March 29, 1812, Richard Rush wrote him "that the President, anxious to avail the country of your services, has it in contemplation to nominate you to the senate as commissary general of purchases ... I am informed also to say, it is most anxiously hoped that nothing may oblige you to withhold

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5. R. Smith to W. Jones, November 2, 1810; W. Jones to R. Smith, November 9, 1810; R. Smith to W. Jones, November 13, 1810; UCSC.

the benefit of your valuable aid in a line so important." Jones tentatively accepted the position on April 1, 1812, but asked to see a copy of the new law which established this post. Rush sent another letter to Jones on April 4 with the information that the President had made the nomination and that it had been approved by the Senate. On April 6 Jones wrote to the Secretary of War, William Eustis, that he still had not received a copy of the law, but that he would start out for Washington as soon as possible. Before beginning his journey, however, the statute arrived, and Jones did not like what he saw. He wrote to Eustis on April 20, 1812, informing him that he would not accept the position and criticizing the law for creating a figurehead post, loaded with responsibility, but bereft of power. Jones wrote,

> The officer certainly has nothing of the Commissary Genl. but the name. It is even more subordinate than the Purveyor, though the duty and labor is greatly enlarged. It is without rank, respectability or adequate emolument, though certainly very important and requiring high integrity, useful talent and extensive knowledge. Indeed there is something extremely forbidding in the restrictions ... penalties all which presuppose a degree of moral turpitude and insensibility to fair fame at which a generous and honourable mind must revolt.

The administration, however, was not able to locate any other first-rate man to take the position, and on May 3, Eustis again asked Jones to accept the post and confessed that otherwise the department would have to "solicit others whose standing and characters are of inferior grade." When Jones again refused, Richard Rush asked him to name two men who might be interested since, for unnamed political reasons, the administration wanted the job to go to a Philadelphian.[6]

Jones was aware of the international difficulties of the Madison administration. As a merchant, he had felt the sting of British impressment. While he was in China in 1805, a British man-of-war had boarded the American merchantman, New Jersey, and removed several sailors. Edward Carrington, the United States Commercial Agent in China, asked Captain Jones what should be done. Jones suggested initial negotiations and consultation, but, recognizing that these means were foredoomed to failure, he urged that, "In

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6. R. Rush to W. Jones, March 29, 1812; April 3, 1812; April 4, 1812; W. Jones to W. Eustis, April 20, 1812; W. Eustis to W. Jones, May 3, 1812; R. Rush to W. Jones, June 30, 1812; UCSC.

the interim it ought to be the unanimous and absolute determination of the American Captains first to resist by firm & cool remonstrance and ultimately to repel by force of Arms, any attempts of the kind in the future."[7] By the summer of 1812, Jones believed that the administration had no choice but to go to war--with England for certain and, perhaps, with France as well. In a letter to Pennsylvania Congressman Jonathon Roberts, Jones told of his reasons for urging the beginning of hostilities immediately.

> I hear every day even in the atmosphere of the coffee house attended by honest Federalists--"now or never there is no honourable alternate but War." As for our political friends they commune with each other with painful and reluctant doubts, succeeded by willing confidence and cheering hope. One common sentiment pervades us all--<u>every hour of delay is dangerous</u>--the hopes, the activity, confidence and intrigues of the opposition receives new life and vigor by the prospect of division. Pronounce the national Fiat and they will be as gentle as lambs--hesitate and they will combine the ..* with the <u>exterior</u> of the Lion.
>
> Those who are for war with both powers instrantos [<u>sic</u>] cannot consistently refuse to go to war with Britain single, if they cannot carry their ... to both. These powers have no claim upon our <u>impartiality</u> which in the want of our declaring against both at once, would I think be displayed

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7. Marion V. Brewington (ed.), "The Press Gang in China," <u>American Neptune</u>, XVII (January, 1957), 72-73.

* ... Sometimes refers to illegible words in manuscript.

> at the expense of wisdom and sound policy. By including France we greatly impair our means of annoying Britain by excluding our flag [and] our freezing [of] commerce from the continent of Europe from whence we could more effectively annoy her [England's] commerce and coasting trade than all the maritime forces of combined Europe.[8]

Finally, in January, 1813, President Madison was able to persuade Captain Jones to accept a position in his administration. The new Secretary of the Navy quit Philadelphia for Washington and left behind his family. He had no great expectations and was neither impressed by his own office nor by the people he met in Washington. He knew his new position would be a difficult one, and had no doubts as to the demands it would make on him. As can be seen in the following letter, which alludes to his new position, Jones' private letters are quite obtuse and full of intricate similes. Fortunately, his official correspondence was usually laconic as it was often composed by a department clerk from his notes. Yet his private correspondence remains as a key to the man's personality and mind, and an interesting commentary on an earlier age.

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8. W. Jones to J. Roberts, June 10, 1812, UCSC.

> Most of my friends whom I have casually met greet me with pleasure and express great confidence, but commisserate me on the Herculean task I have to encounter.
>
> Be it so, but I am sure it will give me pleasure that though the report of its difficulties increase and I answer my hope and confidence is strenthened and the terrors appear to lessen with the serious contemplation I have given to the subject. Having accepted the trust with reluctance, but with the purest motives and most ardent zeal, I ... cause of our country why should I despair? My pursuits and studies has [sic] been intimately connected with the objects of the department and I have not been an inattentive observer of political causes and effects. The truth is that the differences I have to encounter are artificial, but they are not the less difficult on that account. They arise from the corruption of self-interested men who have taken root in the establishment and like the voracious poplar nothing can thrive in their shade. But (as we did in our yard) we can cut it down replace the fair pavement and let in the cheering beams of the sun of truth and honesty. I shall take care however not to cut rashly and indiscriminately. If I cut off the noxious plants, I shall cherish the useful trees.
>
> But of what avail you will say is honest attention and faithful services if assailed by the breath of calumny and faction. I answer, if I am incompetent & grossly negligent it will not be calumny--If I am faithful and reasonably competent the consciousness of virtue and fidelity I hope will sustain me. To expect to pass without lashing would be idle. I have only to request you not to mind it when it does occur.[9]

Soon after his arrival in Washington, the republican Jones wrote to his wife, Eleanor, expressing his disapproval of the society which he had found. He never was at home or

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9. W. Jones to E. Jones, January 23, 1813, UCSC.

happy in the capital's social life and, in the following letter, he reveals his contempt for the masquerade in which he is forced to participate.

> 'Ere I go to the drawing room to play the farce of etiquette, let me snatch a moment to commune with the wife of my bosom whose hourly converse has so long been the solace of my leisure hours.
>
> This is Wednesday evening and all the world in Washington assemble weekly to pay their respects at head quarters and I shall return early and go to writing again. As yet I have not been able to return the visits of ceremony to minister ... and I perceive that my domestic habit, have utterly unfitted me for a courtier for all this gives me pain instead of pleasure, I have seen Tingey's wife [Thomas Tingey, agent of the Navy Department and commandant of the Washington Navy Yard] and she is really a comely genteel and youthful woman while he is a withered tremulous old man.
>
> In my lodgings I am as comfortable as I can be with a steady attentive good servant, and agreeable messmates, but none of the affectionate faces which I have been accustomed to see around me.[10]

Eleanor Jones eventually moved to the capital to be with her husband, but she often returned to Philadelphia for prolonged visits. While she was away in the late summer of 1813, Jones described his bachelor life to her.

> My spirits naturally good and disposition cheerful (for Heaven and you well know that had they not my heart must have long since bowed down) has really had but little to preserve their natural tone. In my lodgings I am a hermit or slave. In my office like

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10. W. Jones to E. Jones, February 10, 1813, UCSC.

> a public pump kept constantly wagging by any one who thirsts after honors or emoluments which they run off with whilst I am left dry. The little recreation I get is a ride to the navy yard where I mount my old hobby horse and feast my eye upon the noble ships that are building and their little children the beautiful Barges which I have constructed after my own fancy. Those little excursions have in a great degree sustained my spirit and my health which is excellent.[11]

To make himself more at home, the Secretary asked his wife to bring him a few items from Philadelphia. Among these were "two barrels of Snowden & Fishers pale ale," a "keg of nice pickled tripe," "a barrel of nice fat mackeral," "three or four pots of french mustard," "a box of currants some soft shelled almonds a jar of olives," plus some table utensils.[12]

The summer of 1813 was a particularly busy and trying time for the Secretary of the Navy. Madison was at his home, Montpelier, in Virginia where he was so ill that at times it seemed he would not survive. Secretary of State, James Monroe, was vacationing in Virginia while the Secretary of War, John Armstrong, was on the northern frontier ineptly conducting the land forces, and Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, was in Russia trying to arrange a

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11. W. Jones to E. Jones, September 17, 1813, UCSC.

12. W. Jones to E. Jones, August 22, 1813, UCSC.

meeting with the British. Jones was the only person with cabinet rank in the capital, and was, in effect, the entire executive arm of the national government.

In Gallatin's absence, Jones had been formally appointed the acting head of the Treasury Department while Gallatin was away, a trust he held from May, 1813, to February, 1814.[13] The President wanted to keep Gallatin as an adviser and he feared that if he removed this wily financier, he would never be able to convince him to return to the cabinet. There was also the possibility that the Senate would refuse to confirm the unpopular Gallatin as a peace commissioner. After Gallatin had actually been confirmed as a member of the official United States delegation at Ghent, a successor was named for the Treasury Department and he never returned to the administration.[14]

When Gallatin left for Europe, he provided Jones with detailed instructions on what he was to do as Acting Secretary

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13. Madison's authorization for this action was a statute of May 8, 1792, which permitted the President to appoint any person to a cabinet office when "death, absence from the seat of government, or sickness" shall prevent the Secretary from performing his duties "until a successor be appointed, or until such absence or inability by sickness shall cease." United States Congress, The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America (Washington, 1856), I, 281.

14. See Raymond Walters, Jr., Albert Gallatin: Jeffersonian Financier and Diplomat (New York, 1957), chapter 20.

of the Treasury. This official memorandum restricted him to proceedural matters and severely curtailed any original actions that he might undertake, especially in the remissions cases wherein ship owners asked that vessels be returned to them.[15] Typical of these cases was the one involving the brig Catherine trading between St. Bartholomew and Halifax under a neutral Swedish flag. When the vessel was searched on the high seas, an American officer noted that her real destination was New Haven, Connecticut. The Catherine was thus plying an illegal trade between the United States and the British West Indies. The owner, J. Martin, was an American merchant who claimed that the insertion of New Haven was a mistake by the foreign captain. The acting Secretary was asked to intercede in this case and innumerable similar ones.[16]

The most pressing problem which Jones faced as acting Secretary of the Treasury was to find a means of financing the war. The projected revenues would not cover the nation's actual expenditures. In 1813, 1814, and 1815, the administration would be forced to seek loans, issue treasury

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15. A. Gallatin to W. Jones, April 20, 1813, UCSC.

16. J. Martin to W. Jones, June 22, 1813, UCSC.

certificates, and raise taxes. The Congress always acceded to these measures just in time to avert a financial disaster. In the summer of 1813 Jones was asked to suggest the best way of raising money. He sent a well-researched answer to Congress which advocated loans backed by an internal tax which would "facilitate the obtaining of the loan," and help to procure it on "favorable terms." The Secretary then presented his reasoning.

> It is ascertained that the terms of the loan, for the present year, would have been more favorable, if the taxes had been previously laid; and it is obvious enough, that, by affording a security for the regular payment of the interest, and the eventual reimbursement of the principal, more stable, and less liable to be weakened or cut off by the natural effects of war, upon internal commerce, capitalists will advance with the greater readiness, and at a lower rate of interest, the funds necessary for the prosecution of the war, public confidence will be ensured, and the means afforded of preserving the public credit unimpaired--a measure of the utmost importance in a country like ours, where, from the lightness of the demands made upon the People, during the continuance of peace, the extraordinary expenses of a state of war can be supplied only by a resort to that credit.[17]

Jones estimated that it would take at least four months of hard work to enable the Treasury Department to set up the apparatus for collecting the internal tax that Congress

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17. ASP, Class III, Finance, II, 624.

had passed. This measure included a direct tax estimated at three million dollars upon land, dwelling-houses, and slaves, plus internal duties on stills, refined sugars, retailers' licenses, bank notes, auction sales, carriages, and an additional levy of twenty cents on each bushel of imported salt. There was, however, more difficulty involved in collecting the unpopular tax than Jones had envisioned. Indeed, of the 190 electoral districts in the nation, there were "74 for which no application or recommendation for Collector" had been received by September 20, 1813. The law was to go into effect on January 1, 1814.[18] Yet the law was operative in time to bring in the needed revenues, and actually raised $3,882,482.18 the first year and, with increased rates, $6,840,732.48 in 1815. By these methods the government managed to keep a surplus which wavered between two and four million dollars in the treasury at all times during the war.[19]

Jones rapidly fell behind in his Treasury Department duties. Clerk Edward Jones reminded Secretary Jones "that

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18. W. Jones to J. Eppes, June 21, 1813; Memo of W. Jones, September 20, 1813; UCSC.

19. See Nielson, "Financial History"; and John W. Kearny, Sketch of American Finances, 1789-1835 (New York, 1887).

there are in this office ready for signature, a number of Remission Warrants, which, ..., are now become matters of record and by reason of their date cannot in any event be executed by any person but yourself. It has always been an established rule in this Department never to permit the chain or series of our official transactions to be interrupted, ..., and I have with great deference ventured to make this statement with a view of drawing your attention to the subject."[20]

Jones never really wanted the added burdens of the Treasury Department and only undertook them with reluctance to help the President. He complained to Eleanor about the increased duties, but because Madison expressed "so much repugnance" at his desire to be relieved of the office, he decided to continue until Gallatin's return which was expected at any time. By December it was obvious that Gallatin would not be returning to the department. Jones thereupon told the President that he could no longer perform the duties of two departments and asked to be relieved of the treasury post as soon as a successor could be found.

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20. E. Jones to W. Jones, February 3, 1814, UCSC.

With the appointment of George W. Campbell in February, 1814, he was relieved of the onerous burden of two jobs. The President, however, continued to consult with him on fiscal matters. A normal request made by Madison pertained to the financing of the war. Jones replied that the nation must rely upon "taxes--a national Bank--loans and Treasury Notes" to continue prosecuting the war. "The product of the first," he continued, "will be remote--the aid of the second cannot be commanded in time to meet the immediate demands on the Treasury which must therefore be derived from the third and fourth."[21]

As the Secretary of the Navy, William Jones had the power to control a great deal of patronage and he was not afraid to use it. He made certain that his own friends and relatives were given government business or positions. His brother, Lloyd, was made captain of the cartel, the Neptune, which took the American peace commissioners to

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21. W. Jones to E. Jones, July 14, 1813; W. Jones to J. Madison, December 21, 1813; UCSC. W. Jones to J. Madison, October, 1814, James Madison Papers (Microfilm Copy by the Library of Congress). Hereafter abbreviated as JMP.

Europe in 1814. Jones' wife's sister married William Strong who died practically impoverished. Jones' sister-in-law supported her family by operating an apothecary shop in Philadelphia. The Secretary ordered the navy agent at Philadelphia, George Harrison, to buy all the medical supplies for the outfitting of the United States frigate Guerriere from Mrs. Strong "because the public will at the same time be as well served, and it will aid the efforts of a respectable and worthy woman to support and educate a large young family."[22] Perhaps Jones' closest friend was William Young, a Philadelphia merchant who was also his financial confidant. Young found himself in tight straits and in need of a job when the war closed international commerce. Jones found a position for him and received Young's thanks, "the place of Naval Store keeper which in your last letter you said you thought you could get for me would be very acceptable by that help I should be able to pay off my Bank debt which is $2100."[23] William Jones was

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22. W. Jones to G. Harrison, September 30, 1814, United States Department of the Navy, "Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Commandants and Navy Agents, 1808-1865" (File microcopy of records in the National Archives: no. 441). Hereafter abbreviated as lsc.

23. W. Young to W. Jones, December 8, 1813, UCSC.

the legal guardian of his wife's nephew, William Strong, Jr., and he attempted to secure a sinecure for him. In a confidential letter to Eleanor, the Secretary wrote about the position he had in mind.

> I am laying a plan for William's future fortune but until I ascertain whether I can bring it to bear you will not suggest it to anyone. I think the President would not refuse any reasonable thing that I should ask. The consulate at Cadiz is one of the best is [sic] the gift of the government. It has been hitherto held by an old Spaniard who has done all the business by a vice consul, who with the best opportunity has by imprudent speculation failed and will be removed and I think there is a disposition to appoint a new Consul. This is what I mean to ask and I think I shall succeed. If I do it insures to William a certain and speedy fortune.[24]

Of course, there was no civil service at this time, and it was perfectly right and reasonable for a high administrative official to see that posts were filled with men he could trust.

Jones himself, however, not only made no fortune from his position, but he fell into bankruptcy because of it. His financial problems went back to 1808 when he returned from India, the owner of a ship with an account of $120,000, three-quarters of which was in indigo cloth and meant for European consumption. The embargo kept the material in the

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24. W. Jones to E. Jones, August 22, 1813, UCSC.

United States until June, 1811, when he sent it with an agent to Russia. He was able to sell it for an unprofitable amount which due to extra charges and storage costs made the entire deal a severe loss. Meanwhile, he had to sell his ship to gain funds, and because of the unsure state of American commerce, could only realize half of its original cost of $47,000.[25] He tried to continue in his commercial business while Secretary. What credits he did have were tied up in Europe and could not come home, while his creditors at home pressed him for payment. In personal letters to friends and in business letters, Jones indicated that his accounts were going down, and he was compelled to ask his creditors for additional sums.[26] He described his financial troubles to his friend, William Young.

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25. W. Jones to J. Madison, April 25, 1814, JMP. W. Jones to William & Francis, September 26, 1813, UCSC.

26. W. Young to W. Jones, January 24, 1813; January 28, 1813; March 1, 1813; March 7, 1813; June 29, 1813; July, 1813; September 19, 1813; December 8, 1813; UCSC. W. Jones to E. Jones, April 7, 1813; September 30, 1814; UCSC. W. Jones to W. Young, July 6, 1813; August 17, 1814; UCSC. W. Jones to J. Savage, September 26, 1813, UCSC. T. Darry & J. Roberts to W. Jones, July 8, 1813, UCSC.

> But after all my toil and trouble and the immense sacrifice of feeling and interest I have made I shall not at my advanced time of life have a shilling left, for estimating my calculated debt interest included at $14,000 and you know all that I own and you will find that my debts will absorb all that I have land and house included. My public situation is the only thing that gives me pain under these circumstances. But the moment peace return [sic], and I do not believe it very remote I shall return to private life and to business, in which with a reputation free from blemish and some branch of business in which I see great advantages with little capital I still hope to spend the residue of my days in that peaceful retirement which I have ever sought with sincere desire.[27]

In an even more poignant letter near the end of his time in office, Jones wrote to Eleanor, "After all I shall return to your arms a beggar with the proceeds of our surplus furniture carriage and horses and a few dollars scraped from the late savings in all perhaps sufficient to support us 12 or 18 months in retired economy. Well never mind it, I shall return with a pure heart and peace of mind as cheerful as a lark and with sufficient common sense to keep out of the snares of public life."[28]

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27. W. Jones to W. Young, April 11, 1813, UCSC.

28. W. Jones to E. Jones, November 6, 1814, UCSC.

By the end of his term Jones' credits amounted to $29,692 and his debts to $47,000 or a net debit of $17,308.[29]

In a little more than a year after taking office, Jones was seriously thinking of resigning. On April 25, 1814, he told Madison that he wanted to leave the Navy Department for personal reasons, but would remain on until the next session of Congress so Madison would have time to choose a successor. By the late spring, his desire to retire had become public knowledge. As his financial troubles worsened, he wrote to Eleanor, "My unceasing efforts will be to get out of office which will absolutely take place in all this year--I think by the 1st of December." On September 11, 1814, he submitted both an official letter of resignation to the President and a private one which explained why he had to give up his position. In the private letter, Secretary Jones declared to Madison that,

> It is now obligatory upon me to meet and make some compromise with those who hold or are bound for my obligations and by my personal exertions to make the best disposition of the property I hold, trusting to better times and future industry for that relief of which my labours and principles I trust have merited. ... Mere abstract poverty is nothing but

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29. W. Jones to Savage & Dugan, April 13, 1815, UCSC.

> sensibly alive to those princples of integrity and punctuality which have guided my whole life, the inability to meet my engagements and to avert the inconvenience and possible loss which may accrue to those who are immediately liable for my obligations is painful in the extreme.

Secretary Jones told Madison that "I shall never regret [my current financial state] if my services shall have been useful to my country and satisfactory to you--a consummation which with very moderate talents and a heart ill at ease, I can scarcely flatter myself." The end had come, however, and he had no regrets. He had done his duty and was glad to have been a part of the Madison administration. Philosophically he commented to his wife upon the public maliciousness all officials have to face.

> Much joy to my successor--whoever he may be. I hope he may acquire honor for himself and fame for his country, but instead of a wreath of laurels he has a much greater chance of acquiring a crown of thorns. The truth is that our Government is so constituted and public sentiments (so called) so capricious and arbitrary that the high public officers are liable to be arraigned and tried & condemned by a species of revolutionary tribunal which though it does not strike off the head stabs the more noble and vital part the reputation.[30]

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30. W. Jones to J. Madison, April 25, 1814, JMP. D. Coxe to W. Jones, May 26, 1814; W. Jones to E. Jones, September 7, 1814; W. Jones to J. Madison, September 11, 1814; UCSC. W. Jones to J. Madison, April 25, 1814, JMP. W. Jones to E. Jones, September 20, 1814, UCSC.

When Jones made it known to Madison that he wanted to retire the President responded with regret. "Whatever may happen," Madison wrote, "I cannot let the present occasion pass without expressing the gratification I have experienced in the entire fulfillment of my expectations, large as they were, from your talents and exertions, and from all those personal qualities which harmonize official and sweeten social intercourse."[31] After Jones resigned a public dinner was held in his honor in Washington as a testimony of the "high esteem" the citizens of that city had for him.[32] The Baltimore Patriot bemoaned Jones' retirement saying that he had "more essentially benefited the department, than any of his predecessors" and that "he embarked in his administerial labors with defined principles of duty, to which he has resolutely adhered, regardless of party clamor or political discontent."[33] Many years after leaving the Presidency, Madison was asked by Henry Lee to comment upon Jones. By this time William Jones would have been

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31. J. Madison to W. Jones, April 24, 1814, JMP.

32. C. Carroll, et al., December 10, 1814, UCSC.

33. Clipping from the Baltimore Patriot, no date, in a letter from R. Spence to W. Jones, November, 1814, UCSC.

involved in a banking scandal which permanently tarnished his reputation, but the ex-president unstintingly praised the man.

> I must be allowed to express my surprise at the unfavorable view taken of the appointment of Mr. Jones. I do not hesitate to pronounce him the fittest Minister who had ever been charged with the Navy Department. With a strong mind, well stored with the requisite knowledge, he possessed great energy of character and undefatigable application to business. I cannot doubt that the evidence of his real capacity, his appropriate acquirements, and his effective exertions in a most arduous service and the most trying scenes, now to be found on the files of the Department, as well as my own, would reverse the opinion which seems to have been formed of him. Nor in doing him justice ought it to be omitted that he had on his hands the Treasury as well as the Navy Department, and at a time when both called for unusual attention, and that he did not shrink from the former, for which he proved himself qualified, till the double burden became evidentally unsupportable.[34]

After leaving the Navy Department, Jones returned to Philadelphia where he was able to recoup the fortune he had lost while Secretary. Partially due to his friendship with Alexander Dallas who became Secretary of the Treasury in October, 1814, and due to his capable handling

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34. J. Madison to H. Lee, February, 1827, JMP.

of the Treasury Department, Jones was elected the first president of the second Bank of the United States in July, 1816. But he was over his head in this capacity. His knowledge of banking was minimal and the chief reasons for his appointment political. He soon became involved in the intra-bank squabble and was implicated in some shady stock transfers.[35] His degree of involvement was never ascertained although it appeared to be more a crime of ignorance than maliciousness. However, he was forced to resign the presidency of the bank, in disgrace, in January, 1819. He then joined with Joshua and Samuel Humphreys in a company to build steamships. This endeavor enabled him to enhance his holdings. From 1827 until 1829 he held the sinecure of Collector of Customs for the port of Philadelphia.[36]

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35. "Memorial of William Jones, late President of the Bank of the United States to the House of Representatives," House Executive Document, No. 130, 15th Congress, 2d Session.

36. For the little biographical information which exists on William Jones, see Frederick, "William Jones," Dictionary of American Biography, X, 205; "William Jones," The National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York, 1907), V, 373; and Kenneth Brown, "The William Jones Papers," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXVI (October, 1942), 479-482.

In the summer of 1831, Jones left fever-ridden Philadelphia for the cool air of the Pocano mountains. On the way there, he stopped at the pleasant community of Bethlehem where he had served his shipbuilding apprenticeship as a boy. He, however, had carried the fever with him and died at the Sun Inn in Bethlehem on September 6. In accordance with his special request, the Moravian Church permitted the Episcopalian from Philadelphia to be buried in their church's beautiful cemetery, "God's Acre," where he lies today.[37]

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37. Levering, History of Bethlehem, p. 653. Some controversy exists on his place of burial. Frederick in the Dictionary of American Biography states that Jones was buried in St. Peter's churchyard, Philadelphia. I could find no gravestones indicating his body even though his wife and family are buried there; see William W. Bronson, The Inscriptions in St. Peter's Church Yard, Philadelphia (Camden, N.J., 1879), p. 90. Bethlehem, on the other hand, does have grave records for William Jones, 1760-1831. Furthermore, it seems inconceivable that the corpse of a man who had died from a contagious fever during an epidemic would be shipped over 60 miles in the summer for burial.

CHAPTER III

THE NAVY DEPARTMENT

When William Jones took command of the Navy Department, the organization was in chaos. The new Secretary prepared himself for his responsibilities by asking his old friend, Alexander Dallas, to compile a brief sketch of all the laws pertaining to the navy, especially those relative to the "powers of the department."[1] There were no naval advisers to the Secretary. It was an entirely pre-professional operation. He was "the department; whatever had to be authorized or done, he authorized and did. To him reported the civilian superintendents or naval commandants of the six navy yards, as well as a fluctuating and widely scattered number of navy agents. Each ship was usually an independent unit, its commander receiving orders directly from the Secretary. ... The system was as simple and embryonic as could have well been imagined.

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1. A. Dallas to W. Jones, January 24, 1813, UCSC.

When faced with the emergency of war, it proved as inefficient as would have been expected."[2]

The enemy's naval administration was theoretically superior, but, in actual use, often fell short of the American system. One writer has said, "Venality and neglect were so extensive ... that an administrative historian, if he did not know in advance that the British navy was by far the strongest and most consistently victorious navy of the period, could easily end with a catalogue of reasons for British naval collapse."[3] At the top of the administrative hierarchy stood "the Commissioners constituted to execute the Office of Lord High Admiral," or, more commonly, the Board of Admiralty. Of a total of seven members, the First Lord and six subordinates, only one or two usually knew anything about naval service although, occasionally, the First Lord himself was a retired admiral. The Board of Admiralty had the overall responsibility for the British navy: its personnel, ships, and services. It was not responsible for naval strategy or

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2. Leonard D. White, The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801-1829 (New York, 1951), p. 270.

3. Daniel A. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole (Princeton, N.J., 1965), p. 2.

tactics--these things were decided by the Cabinet of which the First Lord was a member, usually not a very important one. The Board of Admiralty did forward orders to its commanders on station, and, unlike the United States Navy Department, it did not maintain communications with subordinate officers.

In addition to the Board of Admiralty there were numerous specialized boards which gave advice to the Cabinet. Among these were the Sick and Wounded Office, the Victualling Office, and the Navy Office. The first two were subordinate to the Navy Office and are self-explanatory. The Navy Office was a very influential board of about twenty members who had either risen through the civil service or naval line duty to their position. The Navy Office was the work horse of the Admiralty. It was responsible for everything except strategy, tactics, and recruitment of personnel. It was entrusted with the care of the fleet, the control of naval finances, and the health and subsistence of the sailors. Each member of the Navy Office was a specialist with long experience who was in charge of a particular area. It was such a board which the United States would try to imitate in the years immediately following the War of 1812.

While the Admiralty had a theoretical sovereignty over the Navy Office, in practice, the permanent Navy Office had more authority than the Board of Admiralty. The Cabinet preferred to listen to specialists rather than to political appointees who may or may not know anything about the navy. There was often bitter in-fighting between the two offices which naturally prevented any efficient service. Yet this chaotic system was to be kept until 1832 when a more professional Board of Admiralty was devised.[4]

The United States Department of the Navy had two offices, the Secretary and his staff and the accountant's division; there were nine clerks in the former office and eleven in the latter.[5] The Chief Clerk of the department when Jones arrived was Charles W. Goldsborough who has been called the American Pepys. He was a member of a very wealthy and influential Maryland family, and, except for the two years of Jones' administration, he held the position of Chief Clerk from 1807 to 1843. Jones' removal of this

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4. See Baugh, British Naval Administration, chapter 2.

5. Paullin, "Naval," p. 1309.

seemingly indispensible man was simply a housecleaning move. Jones never accused the man of peculation, but he was convinced that Goldsborough was responsible for most of the department's confusion. On February 27, 1813, he fired Goldsborough and the following day made a memo to himself about the incident. "On my part," the Secretary wrote, "really wishing to render the manner of his retiring as little irksome to him as possible and my determination to dispose with his services being founded upon the excessively disordered and confused state in which I have found every branch of the Department of which he has been the principal director for twelve years, and at the same time witnessing his capacity and facility of business am compelled to attribute it to some other cause than the want of the requisite qualifications, I am justified in selecting another and this he readily admits."[6]

The firing of Goldsborough, however, was more than a simple change caused by an administrative turn-over. It was a sign of the internal squabbling and dissatisfaction which would be inimical to the proper functioning of the

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6. Memo of W. Jones, February 28, 1813, UCSC.

Navy Department. Surprisingly, Goldsborough was apologetic to Jones and thanked the Secretary for being as considerate as he had been--Jones even bought Goldsborough's Washington home as a mutual convenience to both. The Secretary wrote to his wife that, "I did not wish to afford a triumph I gave him an opportunity of giving the change the appearance of choice. ... I continued his service until it had the public appearance of his own act & convenience this reconciled him and he expressed gratitude for the delicacy with which I had treated him." Furthermore, Jones knew that the man had "made himself useful" to many of the naval officers, and he feared that dissension might result if the break appeared to be his doing.[7]

By the summer of 1814, however, Goldsborough was telling Madison that Jones had been duped by Dr. Ewell, an inventor who had tried unsuccessfully to sell the department an inferior grade of gunpowder. The Ewell-Goldsborough feud blossomed into a minor Navy Department scandal which was put to verse in a poem called "The Switch" (see following page). By June, 1814, Goldsborough was bold enough to present

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7. W. Jones to E. Jones, March 22, 1813, UCSC.

FIGURE II

THE SWITCH:

A VERY SHORT POEM, CONSISTING OF ONE CANTO,

OCCASIONED BY A LATE RUPTURE BETWEEN TWO SUBALTERN AGENTS IN THE

NAVY DEPARTMENT.

"*When Rogues fall out, Honest Men come by their rights*"

SYCOPHANTOPOLIS:—Printed by JOHN FEARLESS, at the Ready Money Press, which is open to all parties, but afraid of none—19th January, Anno JACOBI Primi quarto.

Two knaves have just quarreled—Good people, dont wonder
Of their strife what has furnish'd the fuel,
Charles Double C———— kept all the plunder
From his co partner, little *Tom U L*

Which rogue is the greater I can't ascertain,
Nor which is the less of a fighter,
The rogue who from *medicine* made all his gain,
Or the rogue who defrauded in *Nitre*

Tom turns accuser, *Charles* boldly impeaches;
The charges are now laid before you—
But, decide as you will on those two *Navy Leeches*,
They are equal in *guilt*, I assure you.

Charles says "*cunning scoundrel*" is nothing but "chaff,"
Such a charge he with laughter can meet, sir;
Now if scoundrel he chaff, merely raising a laugh,
Pray, what shall we think of the *wheat*, sir?

Of magnanimous Tom, we must ever admire
The patriotism, if not the piety,
Who to cut Charles's throat evinced a desire,
For the evident good of society

Yet some envious souls deny him the praise
Of public spirit, or even of gammon,
And contend that a *deal* is one of his ways
Of promoting his powder-consumption

Be that as it may, it appears that his foe
Would not be the dupe of his cunning,
In short, that *a pistolling* he would not go,
Though he frequently goes out *a gunning*

Charles says, without him that our naval affairs
Would be soon in a dreadful condition;
If the saying be true, then Tom U L appears
Very proper for naval physician

But some people think if our naval success
Should depend on this Charles Double U,
Our maritime victories peaceforth would be less,
And our captures of frigates more faw

The war of these miscreants is no party war,
Since 'tis known by all misses and madams,
That they both were staunch federalists, if you trace them as far
As the reign of old federal *John Adams*.

What they may be at present, no mortal can tell,
Nor is it a fig to the notion,
But that which they *seem* to be, all know right well,
Friends of every administration

Charles says they'll be tried by a Jury of "PEERS:"
I-aver, without aim to be witty,
That twelve great rogues, *who have not lost their ears*,
Can't be found in all Washington city

Or
Our city, 'tis true has its portion of knaves;
Of my mind to give every iota,
Of pick pockets, swindlers, and sycophant-slaves
I admit we possess our full quota

Each belligerent accuses the other of crimes,
Of swindling, official rapacity,
And, though they will lie at all other times,
You may now safely trust their veracity

But, only admitting that one *half* is true
Of what each has said of his brother,
I submit to the minds of th' unprejudiced few
Whether one should not *march* after t'other.

If swindling be cherished, and knavery thrive,
By connivance of this wealthy nation,
For my part, I can see no good reason alive,
Why these things should not go by rotation

Though "in for a penny, and in for a pound,"
Seems a favorite maxim at court;
Yet, in my apprehension, when four years come round
New hands should partake of the sport

An arrangement, so just, would give general joy,
And, besides, terminate those vile quarrels
Which greatly the peace of the city annoy,
By exposing our Washington morals.

Of office the undisturbed tenure perpetual
By no means comports with my wishes;
A few men (according to my civil ritual)
Should at catch *all* the loaves and the fishes.

Then, turn out those fellows, pray, good capt. *Jones*,
Let others come in for some plunder,
The *Ex Knaves* will be glad to get off with whole bones,
When such vile accusations they're under

Source: Unidentified newspaper clipping, December, 1813, UCSC.

his position to the President. The ex-clerk wrote that Dr. Ewell had proclaimed,

> "that if Goldsborough was out of the way, he could make his ten thousands out of the Department--that he would leave no stone unturned--no means, fair or foul, unessayed, to procure his dismissal!"
>
> True to his purpose, thus avowed, he set out by ascribing to me improper connections with contractors--this calumny refuted, the ground of attack was shifted. From one charge refuted he advanced to another, varying his methods and his means, till at length he touched the chord that vibrated to his purpose--with hired agents he industriously circulated a report that I was a "violent federalist--a loud disclaimer against the administration--an apologist for British aggressions &c." Every unprincipled contractor, every expectant of office, united the hue & cry--& the charge, tho false, was believed. One of these Expectants, a man to me a stranger, particularly distinguished himself for his zeal--altho but four month's previously he had written a letter now existing, denouncing your whole administration, he was loud against my "bitter federalism;" & his honorable patriotic views have been accomplished, for he was appointed my successor![8]

Goldsborough, however, was not reinstated to his position until after Jones had left office; Dr. Ewell was never able to sell his gunpowder to the department; and Benjamin Holmans, Goldsborough's successor, soon was fighting with another clerk, E. W. DuVal.[9]

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8. C. Goldsborough to J. Madison, June 18, 1814, JMP.

9. E. DuVal to W. Jones, September 27,1813; B. Holmans to W. Jones, September 30, 1813; UCSC.

When Holmans took over Goldsborough's position as Chief Clerk, he complained about the cramped space and bureaucratic jealousies with which he had to contend. Holmans concluded that, "I cannot and I ought not after the experience I have had, doubt of my ability to give satisfaction in the performance of any and all the duties that may devolve upon me--I want only that confidence that most men have enough of, and my disposition would lead to render the duties easy and agreeable to all connected with me--but as a perfect stranger, laboring under some disadvantages, and finding an office in such a state, that time alone can enable me to become acquainted with the routine of duties to remedy its defects."[10] It would be difficult to overemphasize the confusion existing in the department or to exaggerate the enormous burden placed on the back of the head of that bureau. "In qualitative terms the navy itself was all that one could reasonably expect, but the Navy Department was not."[11]

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10. B. Holmans to W. Jones, no date, UCSC.

11. Harry L. Coles, The War of 1812 (Chicago, 1965), p. 73.

Two of the most amorphous classes of subordinates with whom Secretary Jones had to deal were the pursers and the agents. The pursers were minor, but important, officials whose duties were paying the crew of a vessel and selling necessaries, or "slops," to the crew while at sea. All pursers were required to place a ten thousand dollar bond with the department before assuming office. Soon after becoming Secretary of the Navy, Jones revoked a large number of pursers' commissions and replaced them with men whom he felt were more responsible. The pursers received a salary of $480 per year, but were allowed to make a profit of from ten to fifty per cent on the goods sold to the crew. "Chaplain George Jones wrote that, the purser's berth was 'the best in the ship' for 'in a short time, it brings wealth enough to render the man independent.' He had heard that often a three-year cruise on a frigate in the Pacific a purser could make $30,000." Among the goods sold by the pursers to the men for cash or credit, which was deducted from their pay, were tea, soap, clothing, mustard, sugar, and pepper. The practice of allowing pursers to accept promissory notes from the sailors "could easily

result in a form of debt peonage where the sailor saw only a fraction of his wages." The Navy Department tried to regulate the amount of debt which a man could assume, but the efforts had little effect on halting the practice.[12]

A much more important office was that of naval agent. The men appointed to this office were civilians with some sort of political connections. Thomas Tingey, the commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, was also the navy agent at Washington until November, 1813, when Richard Parott was appointed to his place. Tingey was an exception. No one else ever held the two jobs of agent and commandant simultaneously. As of September, 1814, there were fourteen other agents scattered throughout the country in ports or inland towns where the Navy Department wished to conduct business. The other agents were Samuel Storer of Portland, Maine, Henry S. Langdon of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Amos Binney of Boston, Massachusetts, Constant Taber of Newport, Rhode Island, Joseph Hull of Middletown, Connecticut, John Bullus of New York, New York, George Harrison of Philadelphia,

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12. Harold D. Langley, Social Reform in the United States Navy, 1798-1862 (Urbana, Ill., 1967), p. 82.

Pennsylvania, Jeames Beatty of Baltimore, Maryland, John H. Fawn of Norfolk, Virginia, Joseph Potts of Wilmington, North Carolina, John Robertson of Charleston, South Carolina, A. S. Bullock of Savannah, Georgia, J. K. Sith of New Orleans, Louisiana, and James Morrison of Lexington, Kentucky.[13] Some of these men were responsible for rather large areas. Bullus in New York had to take care of all the lake service as well as the port of New York.

Simply stated, the navy agents were responsible for purchasing all the supplies needed by the department. They were required to give the government a ten thousand dollar bond before receiving their commission. Jones described the duties of an agent thus: "all purchases contracts and engagements for supplies of every description (except such as this Department may specifically direct) will be made by him. And all surplus or condemned articles in the Navy Yard or delivered from Vessels of the United States Navy at the Yard will be disposed of by him and under the direction of the Department as you may report from time to time."[14]

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13. Circular, September 15, 1814, lsc.

14. W. Jones to T. Tingey, November 13, 1813, lsc.

A navy agent was expected to seek bids on an item needed in his area. The agent was not to restrict bidding to his own locale, but was to seek some items nationwide.

Often it was difficult to ascertain where the agents' duties ended and those of a purser began. This was especially important to the men involved as they received a commission on all goods passing through their hands. Hugh Campbell, commandant of the Navy Yard at St. Mary's, Georgia, asked the Secretary to define the respective duties of the agents and the pursers when the latter were on shore.[15] Jones clearly explained the duties of each official to Captain Campbell.

> I wish you to understand that all supplies for the use of the Navy, are furnished by the Navy Agent upon the requisition of the commanding naval officer, or of the Purser approved by the commanding officer. All purchases and contracts are properly and lawfully made only by the Agent, and such requisitions for supplies should be made at regular stated periods, in order to enable the Agent to purchase or contract to advantage. No money can be drawn from the Agent by the Purser, unless approved by the commanding

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15. H. Campbell to W. Jones, January 29, 1814. United States Department of the Navy, "Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Captains" (File microcopy of records in the National Archives: no. 125). Hereafter abbreviated as lrc.

> officer, and the particular object of expenditure stated, so that the Agent may make his requisitions under proper heads of appropriation, briefly explaining the objects to which such expenditure is to be applied.[16]

Most of the correspondence from Jones to the agents is about their failure to keep proper accounts. Jones was a stickler for exact records, and was able to uncover some questionable dealings by closely examining the agents' books. He felt a great responsibility for keeping watch over the agents, for, after all, it was through them that all of the expenses of the navy, except for the salary of the Secretary and his staff, were paid. Upon taking office he received a letter sent to his friend, Chandler Price, by a Mr. Morgan who complained of the corruption of the Navy Agent at New Orleans. The correspondent noted that "I could tell him [Jones] things about the navy here that would astonish him, but there is no time for complaining and explaining. Send a man here who has a warm heart for his country who will do his duty and not devote his time to speculating upon the necessities of his country."[17] Jones felt this complaint was justified and

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16. W. Jones to H. Campbell, February 11, 1814. United States Department of the Navy, "Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Officers, 1798-1868" (File microcopy of records in the National Archive: no. 149). Hereafter abbreviated as lso.

17. B. Morgan to C. Price, January 11, 1813, UCSC.

removed not only the agent at New Orleans, but the one at Charleston as well.[18] Occasionally, he would discipline an agent for improper practices but not dismiss him. A case in point was that of the New York agent, John Bullus. Secretary Jones told Bullus that he had "observed in your general transactions, that the most prominent articles are purchased or procured at rates apparently above the market price and certainly considerably higher than at the other neighbouring agencies; and that your principal transactions are generally confined to two or three particular firms." One of these firms, Jones noted, was that of Bullus, Decatur and Rucker, and the Secretary warned that only if Bullus could prove that open bidding had taken place, would the transactions be honored. He told Bullus, "These things must be explained and corrected." He corresponded with Bullus again on May 23, 1814, and told him not to contract for anything without the express permission of the Department. When Bullus sent in an order for a small number of candles, Jones replied that he meant only major contracts.[19]

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18. W. Johnson to W. Jones, March 31, 1813, UCSC.

19. W. Jones to J. Bullus, April 25, 1814; May 23, 1814; June 4, 1814; lsc.

Word got back to Jones of another incident involving a species of fraud by a navy agent. This time Thomas Tingey who had an ideal situation for practicing his deception was the culprit. As commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, he was able to purchase much equipment for his own use. Some of the yard's tools or other items he was loaning out to friends were not for official navy business. Due to normal wear, the goods soon would no longer have any value to the department, and, as the navy agent in the area, Tingey could sell them at auction to the highest bidder. He thus made a profit on the purchase and sale of every item plus probably some sort of compensation from the friends he had helped by lending them navy goods. Jones told him that "the practice has been entirely irregular" and ordered him to cease it.[20] Shortly thereafter Tingey was replaced as navy agent, but allowed to remain as the commandant of the Washington Navy Yard.

There always seemed to be too great a demand for the money which the department had on hand. The Secretary was

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20. W. Jones to T. Tingey, August 5, 1814, lsc.

continually admonishing captains and commandants not to waste public monies. In a typical letter of this sort, he cautioned Captain Isaac Hull,

> I rely upon your care and frugality so to arrange every thing in your department as to produce the greatest possible public benefit at the least possible expense recollecting that every cent applied to unnecessary or superfluous purposes, is so much taken from the efficient force of the Navy, which it is our sacred duty to cherish and improve that our means are limited and our expenditures hitherto such as greatly to discourage and injure the establishment, and that by proper arrangement and system those who have been adversaries, may be converted into friends.[21]

Jones had to prod the Congress into providing the department with more funds. By February 7, 1813, the Navy Department had a deficit of $1,043,501.45 which Congress had to make up.[22] Although the Secretary was hard-pressed at other times, never again would the department be so low in funds as this time when Jones first assumed the office. The cost of war was far higher than anyone had expected in the year before. The new head was able to estimate future expenses more accurately while, at the same

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21. W. Jones to I. Hull, April 28, 1813, lsc.

22. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 286.

time, he dispensed them more frugally. So competent had Jones become in handling the finances of the Navy Department that a year after he took office, Congressman Thomas Gholson of Virginia commented on his economy. "It had appeared," Mr. Gholson said, "on examination a year ago, from the estimates of the expenditures of the British navy, that the expense per man of the British navy was not more than about one half of that of a man of our Navy. But it appeared, since that day, much reform had taken place; so much so that, ... the comparative expense was now greater in the British service than in ours."[23] There were times, however, even with the most prudent management, when the naval service ran low on funds. This was especially the case toward the end of 1814, but Jones was determined to make it through the year on the money the department had. He ordered the agents to disperse their monies in the following order of priority:

1st	Recruiting Service and Transportation.
2nd	Pay of the Navy, in part, if not the whole.
3d	Provisions, in part, If the purchase is considerable the seller ought not to expect prompt payment.

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23. United States Congress, Annals of the Congress of the United States, 13th Congress, 2nd Session, XXVI, 1011. Hereafter abbreviated as A/C.

4th Other supplies of the most immediate necessity, which from the nature of the article and usage of the market, may require prompt payment, apportioning the payments as equitably as may be, and withholding the largest proportion from the largest claimants.[24]

Even before Secretary Jones had taken office, he recognized that there were serious deficiencies in the structure and functioning of his bureau. He was determined to see that the department would operate efficiently and that the public would get its money's worth. In an eight-page letter addressed to Langdon Cheves, Chairman of the House Naval Enquiry Committee, he made many recommendations for improvement. In regard to the present system of purchase through commissioned agents, the Secretary said that these officials should "received fixed salaries, instead of commissions. That in all purchases they should advertise for sealed proposals, and be bound to accept those most favorable to the government, and that they shall regularly make oath at the settlement of their quarterly accounts, that they have compiled with the above regulations."[25] While he made

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24. Circular to Navy Agents from W.Jones, September 13, 1814, lsc.

25. W. Jones to L. Cheves, January 9, 1813, UCSC.

it the rule of the department for agents to accept the lowest bids on an item and to make a regular settlement of their accounts, the commissioned agents were kept until after Jones had left.

The government was losing money, he observed, from contracts drawn too loosely, which allowed the contractors to cheat the department. The lack of tables of organization and equipment enabled captains to arm, arrange, or equip their vessels as they saw fit. He sought a remedy for this prodigious liberty by classifying "the different vessels, to regulate the armament, complete equipments and allowances of the various stores for each vessel." He said that depots were also necessary at various places with good ports so that ships could draw supplies, thus saving time and expense. He also believed that the government could save money by contracting jobs out to private firms, which had previously been saved for artificers on salary at the navy yards. Additional sources of waste occurred when captains altered their vessels. Jones proposed, instituted, and strictly enforced "A regulation forbidding any commander to alter in any degree the vessels under his command, unless

by particular permission or order from the secretary of the navy." Further wastage arose due to the lack of drydocks, to the placing of navy yards in rivers difficult to navigate, and to the lack of accountability of warrant officers. Jones finally noted that the "gunboats are a waste of money." They were, he said, really adjuncts to land batteries, and, therefore, militia officers rather than naval captains should command them. Furthermore, since the gunboats were "of no use in fighting enemy ships and cannot venture into sea fights," he did not see why the navy should be concerned with their operation at all. In summation, Jones gave his opinions on the chief causes of the inefficiency of the Navy Department, and proposed that a board of naval officers be established to advise the Secretary on all professional matters. As he well knew, the British had used such a board of advisers for years and found that it aided the civilian administrators who had to make military decisions.

> One of the great causes of the present mismanagement is in my opinion owing to the want of an efficient and uniform system for the government of all the different branches of the service. A system, which should fully and clearly establish the duties of every officer, and the mode in which these duties should be performed; a system which should control

> the expenditures of the public monies in all the minute details, as well as in the more general expenditures which should prescribe the armament and equipments and the proper allowances of every description for vessels of each class and which should enable the department at all times to ascertain with precision the actual state and condition of the whole establishment and provide in season for its probable wants.
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> Another and perhaps greater cause of the present mismanagement is, the want of a board of professional men, to advise the head of the department on questions mainly professional, and to superintend the details of service; and particularly to see that all established regulations shall be carried into complete and full effect. To this board might be applied also the duty of making all contracts, of examining the accounts of all officers charged with stores (pursers excepted) to examine midshipmen & certify to their qualifications for promotion.
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> The proper persons to constitute such a board at present, are conceived to be three naval men, having under their direction a surgeon general and contractor general.[26]

This document was unique in the history of the Navy Department. The letter was meant to be one of private suggestions to a concerned Congressman, and not to be an official statement of the Secretary of the Navy. Yet this was the first time in the nation's history that any naval Secretary had tried to plot a rational organization for the department and to suggest corrections for the deficiencies which had grown since 1798.

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26. W. Jones to L. Cheves, January 9, 1813, UCSC.

When Secretary Jones was pressed for more information by the official Senate and House committees on the navy, he refused to be hurried into any quick decisions. At first he asked Congressman Burwell Bassett of Virginia to sponsor legislation establishing a purveyor's office, but later changed his mind and only requested two additional clerks.[27] The Senate committee also pressed Jones for a detailed plan of reorganization; and although he admitted to the members that "no object can be more sensible" toward reform "than myself," he asked to be allowed to have time for reflection. "And, as it is better to labor with known evils, than to hazard a premature and inadequate system, I have thought it best to postpone the subject for the present, respectfully submitting, however, to the wisdom of Congress to revise the system, if it shall deem it now necessary."[28]

William Jones would not communicate any additional ideas on reorganization until near the very end of his term, but he carried out many of the departmental reforms he had suggested to Cheves on his own. Agents and pursers were told that they had to make monthly reports; warrant officers

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27. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 285-286.

28. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 307.

were made responsible for articles in their care; many artificers were fired, and some of the shipbuilding was contracted out to private firms; full warehouses were set-up in ports to enable ships to reload quickly and return to sea; all contracts were to be let out on a competitive basis; ships were classified, and a primitive table of organization and equipment was devised to provision them; and, finally, no naval commander was permitted to alter his ship without the express permission of the Secretary of the Navy.

In November, 1814, Jones submitted a plan to the Senate for the "Re-organization and Extension of the Navy, the Establishment of a Board of Inspectors, and a Naval Academy." This report reflected his views after two years in office and confirmed his earlier opinions. He first noted in his report that "the duties enjoined, or which necessarily devolve upon the Secretary of the Navy, particularly during a period of active and diversified hostility, are beyond the powers of any individual to discharge to the best advantage, cannot be doubted; though, by great labor and assiduity, with adequate professional qualifications, he may possibly

execute the general and most essential branches of duty with tolerable success." While Jones recommended reform, he did not advocate a wholesale change in the department. It, Jones said, must save those features to which "the exalted reputation of our infant navy must be attributed." While the navy itself was excellent, some components, Jones felt, should have been dropped, especially the "local service" or gunboat fleets which were "more expensive and wasteful than that of the regular navy."[29]

He cautioned the Senate not to waste excessive amounts of time in investigating the Department, since such procedures would only encourage petty bickering and would hinder reform. He reminded the committee that the growth of the economy of the United States would insure an increase in the navy and naval expenses. More ships would require more timber. The nation's reserve of trees, therefore, must be carefully guarded to prevent wastage. Furthermore, as the service grew, the more men it would require to man the ships. Voluntary enlistments, he said, would not fill the ranks and he suggested a "draught" to supply the necessary

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29. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 320-321.

manpower.[30]

Secretary Jones went so far as to draw up a model act for his Department. Herein he proposed that in order to insure better officers for the navy, a naval academy should be established. This school would have "suitable professors, for the instruction of the officers of the navy in those branches of the mathematics and experimental philosophy, and in the science and practice of gunnery, theory of naval architecture, and art of mechanical drawing, which are necessary to the accomplishments of the naval officer."[31] In addition to the new school, Jones proposed that two additional officials be created for the department. The first of these would be that of Naval Constructor who would supervise the construction of all future naval vessels. He felt that a Paymaster of the Navy was also needed to account, at a high level, for the large amount of money paid by the navy to its personnel. The most important proposal, in terms of immediate usefulness, was the establishment of a board of five naval inspectors,

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30. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 321-322.

31. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 323.

each a captain assigned specific duties, plus the obligation of advising the civilian Secretary on professional matters. One member of the board would handle the general correspondence of the board and be in charge of the flotilla service on the New Orleans station. A second officer would conduct the general military correspondence of the department with all the officers of the navy; he would also direct the flotilla on the southern station. The third member of the board would supervise the ordnance of the department and would be in charge of all logistical transportation and assume care of the flotilla service in the Patapsco and Delaware rivers and at New York. The fourth officer would superintend the victualling of the service and supplying the medical stores while, at the same time, directing the flotilla service on all the naval stations from New York eastward and on Lake Champlain. The fifth captain would keep account of all the equipment needed for the service, not precluded in the above, and would also be in charge of the navy operating on the Great Lakes.[32]

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32. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 323.

The Secretary of the Navy also had in mind additional duties for this board. Since one man could not do everything, he desired to have a number of competent officers advise future secretaries of the professional way in which the Department's problems could be solved. Specifically, he wanted to see the book of naval regulations upgraded. He had the following ten points in mind for the new board to consider:

> 1st. Uniform regulations, establishing the several classes of ships and vessels in the navy of the United States; with tables of the dimensions, proportions, number, quantity, quality, nature, and description, of masts, spars, rigging, anchors, cables, armament, and equipments, of all kinds; and of the quantity, quality, and description, of provisions and stores, of every species, for a given period for each class.
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> 2d. Regulations for receiving, preserving, issuing, and strictly accounting for the expenditure of, materials and stores, of all kinds, and of every department of the service, within the United States.
>
> 3d. Regulations for surveying and authenticating the actual state and condition of all the ships and vessels of the navy, and of all materials and stores, of every species, reported to be decayed, damaged, or defective; and for directing the repair, conversion, sale or other disposition of the same, as the nature of the case may require.
>
> 4th. A more perfect system of general regulations, for the naval service, at sea, and on the lakes.

5th. General regulations for the flotilla, or force employed in harbor defence, adapted to the peculiar nature of that service.

6th. Uniform regulations for the navy yards, arsenals, and depots of stores and materials.

7th. Regulations for the cruising ships and vessels of the navy, while in port; for the recruiting service; and for the officers of the navy, while on shore, on duty, or on furlough; in order to ascertain the actual state and local situation of all the officers.

8th. A system of detailed regulations for the naval hospitals, and medical department of the navy, within the United States.

9th. An entire and new system of regulations for the conduct of pursers in the navy, accurately defining their duties, securing a more strict accountability, limiting their amoluments by a fixed and reasonable standard, and protecting the seamen of the navy from the undue advantages which may be practised, with impunity, under the present system.

10th. Regulations for ascertaining, by examination, the moral character and professional qualifications of all the officers of the navy, below the grade of master commandant, classing them in the scale of their several merits; and of the pretensions of those who may be selected for promotion, as well as of the candidates for warrant appointments in the navy.[33]

This paper was a major landmark. No man had ever before drawn up such a statement on the Navy Department. William

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33. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 323.

Jones had used his years of experience in shipping, sailing, and management to prepare a clear, detailed, and specific set of recommendations for improving his department. Nothing else in the first two decades of the Navy Department approached the systematic organization which he hoped to inculcate in the bureau. Shortly after he left office, Congress would establish a Board of Naval Commissioners based on Jones' recommendations. The leading authority on administrative history during this period, Leonard D. White, has said, "From the professional point of view this report was an extraordinary document, certainly the most significant that had come from the department since its foundation."[34] Because of this paper, Jones' influence would be felt by the Navy Department for a long time for the betterment of the service.

The book of regulations which the navy was still using in 1815 was over fifteen years old and constituted little more than thirty-six pages of admonitions. Stemming from Jones' suggestions, a new 147-page manual was compiled by

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34. White, The Jeffersonians, p. 273.

the recently established Board of Naval Commissioners in 1815. This was known as "the Blue Book." The new manual remained in force, with minor changes, for over thirty years. A study of the 1815 manual which was first published in 1818, provides an important introduction to the United States Navy of the period. It is a complete and practical guide to the duties and responsibilities of all grades of personnel within the service with additional information on navy yards, purchasing, and ships.[35] The writing of this important manual was due to Jones' proposals in his paper.

The House asked the senior naval captains to comment upon Jones' report. With unanimous resolve, all agreed, in general, with the Secretary's proposals. William Bainbridge, Stephen Decatur, Oliver Perry, David Porter, Lewis Warrington, and Samuel Evens felt that three instead of five would be a more workable number on the Board. Some officers disagreed with specific parts of the report. Bainbridge thought that duties should not be assigned to individual

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35. United States Department of the Navy, Naval Regulations (January, 1802; reprinted in 1809 & 1814). United States Department of the Navy, Rules, Regulations and Instructions for the Naval Service (Washington, 1818). See also Louis H. Bolander, "A History of Regulations in the United States Navy," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXIII (November, 1947), 1355-1361.

members since " a considerable part" of these "would require, for the public interest, the united talents of the board." Captain Stewart agreed with Bainbridge. Furthermore, Stewart did not think a naval academy was necessary. The captain wrote that "the best school for the instruction of youth in the profession is the deck of a ship, presuming that none would be offered or received into the service as midshipmen whose education had not been such as to fit them for officers, and calculated for gentlemen." On the whole, all the captains agreed that some change was necessary in the department and that Jones' plan was a competent one.[36]

The Congress, acting on Jones' recommendations, and those of the officers, passed a bill to establish a board of naval commissioners in 1815. Following the captains' suggestions, only three members were to be appointed to this board, and all must have held the rank of at least post captain. The new board was to be "attached to the office of the Secretary of the Navy," and was to be responsible for "all the ministerial duties of said office, relative

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36. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 354-359.

to the procurement of naval stores and materials, and the construction, armament, equipment, and employment, of vessels of war, as well as all other matters connected with the Naval Establishment of the United States." However, it was specifically noted that the civilian secretary was to keep the "direction of the naval forces of the United States" and that nothing in the act should be considered as an abrogation of this power.[37]

Thus in two short years William Jones had taken a rather chaotic organization and turned it into a functioning bureau. The Secretary of the Navy reformed his department as far as he could under the existing laws by weeding out the personnel whose presence harmed the establishment and by continually checking on those who remained. Finally, after mature consideration, at the end of his term, Jones proposed a coordinated system of reform which would enable the department to function like the efficient machine it was hoped it would resemble.

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37. A/C, 13th Congress, 3d Session, XXVIII, 1908.

CHAPTER IV

NAVAL COOPERATION

The Department of the Navy, as part of the executive branch of the government, was often called upon for suggestions by both the President and the Congress. Secretary William Jones sought to cooperate closely with the other branches of government. Congress was important for the financial backing it gave the department; good relations with Madison were essential for executive harmony; and the War Department was of course often associated with the navy in mutual operations.

Both the House and Senate had a standing Naval Committee to keep watch over the Navy Department. In addition, the House established three select committees: a Committee on Laws Relating to the Protection of American Seamen, which was chaired by James Milnor (Federalist, Pennsylvania); a Committee on the Economy, Management, and Efficiency of the Naval Department, whose head was Langdon Cheves (Republican, South Carolina); and the Committee on Economy in the

Naval Establishment, headed by William Reed (Federalist, Massachusetts). Although hearings were held by these committees, only three reports were issued from January 3, 1813, to December 1, 1814. One concerned the payment of prize money and bounties to privateers (February 13, 1813), the second, the "Distribution of Swords to the Officers in the Squadron at the Attacks on Tripoli" (February 26, 1813), and the third, the creation of military brevet rank for naval officers (November 28, 1814). The Secretary of the Navy submitted but fourteen formal reports to Congressional naval committees during his two years in office. About half of them were reports of naval battles, two concerned departmental reorganization, others included a register of naval personnel, the condition of navy yards, and a report on the deficiencies in the naval appropriations. Secretary Jones also had two communications with a House committee on the "Incursions of the Enemy" in regard to the capture of Washington. He revealed in one that as late as July 1, 1814, his own impressions inclined him to believe that the British would not attack the capital as "the only important objects,

according to my view, being the naval depot and public shipping."[1] He also submitted a detailed account of his own actions during the enemy's attack and admitted that he had given Thomas Tingey a direct order to destroy all the public stores, buildings, and ships at the navy yard in the event of the capture of the city. Furthermore, he related how he had had Commodore Joshua Barney aid the land forces with ordnance from naval vessels, and had ordered the 500 sailors and 120 marines in Washington to cooperate as closely as possible with the army.[2] Secretary Jones himself apparently tried to avoid dealing with Congress except when absolutely necessary. He felt that the legislature failed to provide the department with adequate funds and blamed it for some of the difficulties he had encountered due to the lack of money. On September 25, 1814, he complained to his friend Alexander J. Dallas, the Secretary of the Treasury, that "Congress have met in a bad temper, grumbling at everything in order to avert the responsibility

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1. ASP, Class V, Military Affairs, I, 540-541.

2. ASP, Military Affairs, I, 575-577.

which they have occurred [sic] in refusing to provide the solid foundation for revenue and relying upon loans. They have suffered the specie to go out of the country, adopted a halfway system of taxation, refused or omitted to establish in our time a national bank, and yet expect the war to be carried on with energy."[3]

Although he probably spoke frequently with Madison, Jones had very little written communication with the President. Throughout the summer of 1813, Madison lay near death at Montpelier. The only reports which the Secretary of the Navy sent to the President during this time dealt with battle accounts. In 1814, Madison seemed to be able to take a more active interest in Navy Department affairs. In a letter of May 4, 1814, the President related to Jones the opinions he had received from the Secretary of War relative to attacking the enemy on the Thames River by removing troops from Fort Erie and securing naval cooperation. Madison asked Jones if he thought that a naval force could

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3. W. Jones to A. Dallas, September 25, 1814, quoted in Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, p. 327.

be assembled on the eastern end of Lake Erie and if that force would be successful. Two days later Jones replied that he had no evidence that the enemy was ready to move since England like the United States was experiencing difficulty in procuring men and supplies. The Secretary, therefore, counseled caution. On June 3, 1814, the President sent Jones a memo from a cabinet meeting which asked for detailed information on "the plan of campaign which our means military and naval render most eligible." Madison specifically wanted (1) "a statement of the force on the Lakes," (2) the "prospects of additional naval support on the Lakes," (3) the "state & conditions of all vessels of war on the Atlantic frontier," (4) an "estimate of the naval force of the enemy," and (5) "ditto, understood to be destined for our coast." Jones replied with a twenty-three-page letter, but no evidence remains of what actions the President took because of it.[4]

Apparently Jones asked Madison directly for help only once. In the fall of 1814, the department's funds had run

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4. J. Madison to W. Jones, May 4, 1814; W. Jones to J. Madison, May 6, 1814; J. Madison to W. Jones, June 3, 1814; W. Jones to J. Madison, June 6, 1814; JMP.

low, and Congress appeared unwilling to act. The Secretary told the President, "I am destitute of Money in all quarters. Seamen remain unpaid and the recruiting service is at a Stand. I have none for the most urgent contingent cases. If the salvation of a city depended upon the prompt transportation of a body of our seamen I have not a dollar. In some cases articles contracted for or purchased are withheld until funds appear to meet them. We are all appraised [sic] of the unpleasant cause but it is our duty to make known to you the consequences."[5] Fortunately, Jones did not have to shift a body of seamen to defend a port, for Congress was not willing to act after this date. Although the relationship between the President and the Secretary of the Navy, on a personal level, was extremely cordial, there is no indication that Madison provided any sort of written direction or gave advice to his naval Secretary on how he should administer his department.

A friendly atmosphere had to exist between William Jones and the Secretary of War, John Armstrong. There is no evidence that the two men did anything but cooperate

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5. W. Jones to J. Madison, October 15, 1814, JMP.

with each other. Armstrong, however, met with public disfavor due to his inept handling of the Washington campaign. Neither Jones nor he expected the British to attack the capital, but while the Secretary of the Navy had no responsibility for the defense of Washington, Armstrong had been entrusted with that duty. The Secretary of War "insisted that he had omitted no steps in defense of Washington 'which had been enjoined on him.'" The President, however, told him that it was his duty "not only to execute plans but to devise them."[6] This was only the final event of a series which brought the administration's wrath upon Armstrong. Previous to this, he had been rebuked by Madison for politicking with the generals behind the President's back. Furthermore, Armstrong's northern campaigns during the summer and fall of 1813 were fiascos full of petty bickering which accomplished nothing.[7] The loss of the capital was the final episode in this series of calamitous events which cost Armstrong his position in the Cabinet.

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6. Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, p. 314.

7. See Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, pp. 280-283.

While the professional relationship between Jones and Armstrong was always cordial, Jones seems to have had a different private opinion, "I observe what you say of Armstrong and what he says of myself. Would to God! I could return the compliment. I receive it as the more estimable as coming from one whose nature and habits forbid him to speak well of any man. I am willing he should write my epitaph I desire no better than he has uttered. I have his address. It is a poor subterfuge. ... He is full of venom but without a sting. Though I abhor the means employed to coerce the President to dismiss him I am glad we are clear of him even for the short time I remain."[8] Jones made even stronger remarks about Armstrong in a letter to Alexander J. Dallas. "With much cunning, an insufferable degree of vanity, a caustic pithy pen, and the affection of military science, has this man imposed himself upon society without one useful and valuable quality either social civil or military."[9]

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8. W. Jones to E. Jones, September 7, 1814, UCSC.

9. W. Jones to A. Dallas, September 15, 1814, quoted in Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, p. 315.

The only serious point of contention in an otherwise harmonious relationship between the officers of the army and the navy was over their respective rank. The commander of an army was always a brigadier or major general, but the navy commander on the scene was only a captain even though he was given the honorary rank of commodore. The army officers felt that this difference in rank gave them the authority to command their naval counterparts as they saw fit. Furthermore, the Navy Department had standing orders that on certain stations, the naval commander was subordinate and obedient to the military commander. Jones wrote to the President that such a system of subordination was "fraught with consequences extremely injurious to the service and to the public interest. ... Our Naval officers revolt at the order because they feel that a General however great his talents, is as little qualified to direct the maneuvers or appreciate the effects of the position of the Naval squadron as they are to determine that of an army. Our nautical habits, mode of thinking and the example of that nation whose navy has sustained the highest eminence sanction the objections, and I think it will be judicious to confine

the command of the naval forces on all stations, and on all occasions to Naval officers with instructions to co-operate with the military."[10] Apparently the President agreed with this recommendation since there is no further mention of subordination in letters between the Secretary of the Navy and his squadron commanders.

Commodore Isaac Chauncey engaged in more joint undertakings with the army than his peers. He proposed that "the President may give some Brevet rank"that the officers of the Army would recognize "when a naval officer was acting on shore." He sought no army command, "I beg, however," he wrote, "to be clearly understood as disclaiming all idea or wish of obtaining permanent military rank; my only object is to place my relative rank with officers of the Army (when acting together) upon that footing that neither they or myself shall be led into error by entertaining erroneous opinions whereby the publick service may suffer."[11] This idea of a brevet military rank for naval commanders was seriously considered by both the Secretary of the Navy and the naval committees of Congress. It was only when the

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10. W. Jones to J. Madison, February 26, 1813, JMP.

11. I. Chauncey to W. Jones, March 18, 1813, lrc.

latter body reported negatively on the suggestion on November 28, 1814, that the idea was given up. Just a few days previous to this congressional report, the new Secretary of War, James Monroe, and Jones issued a joint order (November 23, 1814) which established a relative rank between the services although both agreed that officers of one service should not be allowed to command the forces of the other branch. By this order, captains who were commodores of squadrons were recognized as having the same authority as brigadier generals in the army. Thus the theoretical problem was solved at a time when almost all major joint actions had already taken place.

Fortunately, on a practical level, the cooperation between the services was good. Correspondence does exist between General Jacob Brown and Commodore Chauncey that cooperation was sometimes subject to differences of opinion between the commanders.[12] Difficulties also arose on Lake Champlain where Commodore Thomas Macdonough simply commandeered part of the military forces to man his naval vessels.

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12. J. Brown to I. Chauncey, July 13, 1814; I. Chauncey to J. Brown, August 10, 1814; quoted in Paris M. Davis, An Authentick History of the Late War between the United States and Great Britain (Ithaca, N.Y., 1829), pp. 156-158.

General George Izard complained to the Secretary of War that "The circumstances of taking soldiers from our ranks to man the Navy is in every aspect a very unpleasant one. It is not only unjust to the individuals, but mortifying to their officers."[13] The brilliant naval victory on this lake three months later, however, stifled any criticism of Macdonough. More typical was intent expressed in a letter from Oliver Hazard Perry to Jones. "I need not assure you, sir," the captain wrote, "that every possible exertion will be made by the officers and men under my command to assist the advance of the army; and it affords me great pleasure to have it in my power to say, that the utmost harmony prevails between the army and the navy."[14]

Wherever there was a possibility of joint operations, Jones gave careful instructions to his commanders. He wrote a letter to Daniel J. Patterson, the new squadron commander at New Orleans, on the subject of naval cooperation with the army.

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13. G. Izard to J. Armstrong, June 10, 1814, quoted in Carl E. Skeen, "John Armstrong and the Role of the Secretary of War in the War of 1812," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ohio State University, 1966), p. 237.

14. O. Perry to W. Jones, September 24, 1813, quoted in John Brannon (ed.), Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, During the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15 (Washington, 1823), p.215.

> On all important occasions where the military operations may require the cooperation of the Naval forces, you will use every effort in your power, to render it effectual; but this will be by mutual concent, between the Commanding General and yourself, not by his command. For the Naval and Military commands are separate, and independent, and governed by the enclosed joint regulations of the War and Navy Departments; of which the Commanding General has doubtless the counterpart. Nevertheless, it is all important, and I am sure you will cherish the sentiment, that the utmost harmony should prevail; and indeed it is equally honourable to both branches of the service, that whenever they have been combined, the harmony and emulation, that have prevailed, are without example.[15]

"The military commander must recollect," Jones stressed, "that Naval Officers act under a distinct and independent authority--that they will exercise their own judgment on their proper element, and are bound only by the orders they receive from this department, or their immediate commanding officer."[16] He reminded his officers, "you are to be the exclusive judge of the nature, extent, time and circumstances of the required cooperation."[17] With such an understanding in mind, the naval officers did provide active cooperation in all of the important operations on the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, and New Orleans.

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15. W. Jones to D. Patterson, October 18, 1813, lso.

16. W. Jones to A. Murray, May 8, 1813, lso.

17. W. Jones to A. Sinclair, May 25, 1814, UCSC.

Privateers, privately owned, armed vessels of war, presented a problem. "There were over 500 registered privateers but most of these were small vessels that made only a single cruise. Only about 200 were large enough to carry a crew of 50 men or more, and probably there were no more than 50 seagoing vessels on the ocean at one time."[18] How could the Secretary control these ships? As a para-naval force, the privateers could have acted under his control; yet he had no power at all over them. Furthermore, they usually successfully competed with the department for the available seamen. Historians have often seen privateers as a hindrance to the navy. Henry Adams wrote that, "Nothing injured the navy so much as privateering. Seamen commonly preferred the harder but more profitable and shorter cruise in a privateer, where fighting was not expected or wished, to the strict discipline and murderous battles of government ships, where wages were low and prize money scarce."[19] Jones, however, would not have agreed, for he did not see the privateers in such a light. In a

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18. Coles, War of 1812, p. 95.

19. Henry Adams, History of the United States of America (New York, 1908), VII, 337.

report to Congress on these vessels he stated, "One of the most efficient means of distressing the commercial and military marine of the enemy, is the capture and detention of his seamen, as well as to enhance the difficulty of manning his ships, as to provide for the exchange, and to retain hostages, to ensure the proper treatment of our own."[20] He was proposing a reduction in the duties a privateer had to pay on his captures in order to encourage the declining profession of privateering. He made this communication not as Secretary of the Navy but as Acting Secretary of the Treasury. Although the two offices might have been separable, the man's mind was not. He traced the cause of the end of privateering "more from the delicacy of remuneration in the nett [sic] proceeds of the prizes, than from the vigilance and success of the enemy in recapturing."[21] Jones concluded this report by asking Congress for subsidies or bounties for this important force. "Whatever encouragement may be devised for the destruction of the ships of the enemy on the ocean, and the bringing into port his captured seamen,

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20. ASP, Finance, I, 646.

21. ASP, Finance, I, 645.

will inflict the deepest possible wound upon his commerce and marine--the vitals of his resources and power."[22]

The report was delivered on July 21, 1813, and the Congress acted with surprising speed. On August 2, 1813, they passed two acts relating to privateers, and, on the following day, a third. The first of these statutes reduced the duties on prizes by one-third. A second act authorized the Secretary of the Navy to place on the pension list any privateersman wounded or disabled in the line of duty. In addition, a bounty of twenty-five dollars was granted by Congress for every prisoner captured and delivered to a United States agent by an armed private vessel. Partially due to these laws, the pace of privateering picked up so that "Of a total of some 1,300 prizes taken, about 1,000 were captured during the last eighteen months of the war."[23] Furthermore, due to the close blockade of the American coast, most of these captures were taken just off the shores of the British Isles.

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22. ASP, Finance, I, 646.

23. Coles, War of 1812, p. 98.

The Navy Department under William Jones ably dealt with the other bureaus of the government. The Secretary's relations with Congress, the President, and the Secretary of War were always most cordial. Jones saw to it that his commanders would willingly cooperate with military leaders on joint operations while, at the same time, maintaining their separate identity as naval officers. Finally, the problem of the decline of privateering was solved when Jones advocated congressional encouragement to this important force. The Secretary looked favorably upon anything which would aid the navy in driving the enemy's commerce and warships from the seas.

CHAPTER V

STRATEGY

The United States had nothing that could be called a general naval strategy before the War of 1812. But the administration soon recognized that it had a twofold job. First, it must protect its borders--maritime as well as land--from attack. Second, it would hurt the enemy where it could. Military men had initially thought that the best place to make the British feel the sting of war was in Canada. The disastrous land campaigns of 1812, however, soon made it obvious that the United States would have to build a naval force on the Great Lakes for protection. The surprise came on the high seas. Here the United States quickly won a number of dramatic, if militarily unimportant, victories in the first six months of the war.

William Jones understood the commerce of the oceans. Soon after taking office, he asked himself, "How then are we to combat the Enemy and make him feel the war?" His answer was a statement of faith in the prevailing policy

being pursued by the administration, and the effects this should produce upon the enemy. First, he knew that a "decisive superiority" was necessary on the Great Lakes, and he felt that the nation had already obtained it. Second, he expressed a belief that "our blockaded [ships] will soon be out" and they will be able to "make such havock among their commercial fleets and light cruisers" that the enemy will be diverted "from the petty larceny warfare in our Bay." Finally, the Secretary said that he did not believe that England would attack any "of our towns" not due to "his [England's] clemency but to the dread of the infidelity of his seamen."[1]

The problem naturally arose as to the best manner of achieving the nation's naval objectives. Jones knew that the ships on the ocean would have three main tasks. The first was to capture as many British merchantmen as possible, thereby ruining that sea-oriented nation's economy. Second, to capture any of the enemy's ships-of-war so long as there was little chance of an American loss. Finally, by attacking the enemy's shipping of all types, it was thought that he

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1. W. Jones to ?, April 5, 1813, UCSC.

would have to restrict the use of his naval vessels off the American coast to protect his own fleets.[2] Yet the best way to achieve these three objectives had not been ascertained. Even before the war had begun, it had been decided to attack in single-ship actions, and this decision has been criticized by historians for the more than 150 years since the war.[3] Most of the captains agreed with this decision. Captain Stephen Decatur wrote that the "Best use of the navy would be to send single ships out with large store of provisions so that they can cruise at a distance from the United States & no more than 2 frigates together. This would be hard for the enemy to trace or find. These would be strong enough to attack a convoy. Greatest danger would be closest to port so they should stay out as long as possible."[4] Captain John Rodgers was the one officer who disagreed. He felt that a "squadron of 2-3 frigates & 1 sloop" should cruise off the British Isles, that another similar squadron should attack the enemy's trade in the West

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2. Charles O. Paullin, Commodore John Rodgers (Cleveland, 1910), p. 275.

3. See especially Mahan, War of 1812.

4. S. Decatur to P. Hamilton, June 8, 1812, lrc.

Indies, and that the rest should protect our coast.[5] In a later letter, he was even more specific when he said, "If war is declared & the United States gets a squadron to sea they might be able to beat the English in detail & be the strongest power until reinforcements arrive from England."[6] He was given five ships to command. His unlucky cruise only convinced the administration that what could be done by a squadron could be achieved more economically by single ships. Furthermore, Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton and the other captains were cautious gamblers. They feared a concentrated fleet action which could destroy half the American navy in one blow. Single-ship cruises, they reasoned, would enable the captains to commit their ships at will, and reap a large harvest of merchantmen. While the number of commercial ships taken was large, the naval battles were insignificant. "The commerce raiding of American cruisers and privateers ... did inflict serious injury by capturing well over a thousand British merchant vessels in the course of the war, but such losses, while

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5. J. Rodgers to P. Hamilton, June 3, 1812, lrc.

6. J. Rodgers to P. Hamilton, June 19, 1812, lrc.

not without political effect in Great Britain, fell far short of paralyzing the economic life, and hence the fighting power of the British Empire."[7] Another reason for favoring the single-ship cruises was that in the United States Navy there was a total lack of organization afloat. "The highest rank was that of captain. When two or more vessels were in company, the senior captain might become commodore of the squadron. But that was only a temporary designation. Each vessel was generally regarded as an independent entity responsible directly to the Department, rather than as a component of a larger force under a single command."[8] This made each captain jealous of his own powers to command and limited his willingness to cooperate with other captains. Thus the decision was made, and kept, that cruises should ideally be of single ships with perhaps a few vessels acting in concert when mutually convenient and advantageous to all.

William Jones knew the nation's limited capabilities only too well and early agreed that single-ship actions

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7. Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power, p. 78.

8. Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power, p. 77.

would be the best way to fulfill the national strategy. In a circular letter to five of his captains, he remarked that "Our great inferiority in naval strength does not permit us to meet them on this ground [squadron action] without hazarding the precious gem of our national glory." He continued by expressing the manner in which the American navy was uniquely equipped to harass the enemy via single-ship actions.

> We have, however, the means of creating a powerful diversion & of turning the scale of annoyance against the enemy. It is therefore intended to dispatch all our public ships now in port, as soon as possible, in such positions as may be best adapted to destroy the commerce of the enemy from the cape of good hope to cape clear and continue out as long as the means of subsistence can be procured abroad in any quarter.
>
> If anything can draw the attention of the enemy from the annoyance of our coast to the protection of his own rich & exposed commercial fleets, it will be a course of this nature. & if this effect can be produced, the two fold object of increasing the pressure upon the enemy & relieving ourselves will be attained.
>
> Cruising singly will also afford to our gallant commanders a fair opportunity of displaying distinctly their judgment skill & enterprise & of reaping the laurel of fame & its solid appendages which so extended a field of capture without impairing the means of continuing the pursuit cannot fail to produce, ...[9]

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9. W. Jones to J. Rodgers, W. Bainbridge, S. Decatur, C. Stewart & C. Morris, February 22, 1813, lso.

The United States revelled in those gallant single-ship actions which seemed to prove the righteousness of her cause. Jones, elated over the capture of the Epervier by the Peacock, crowed, "I like these little events they keep alive the national feeling and produce an effect infinitely beyond their intrinsic importance."[10] The President, however, was often not as sanguine. With the successes of the British army on the Continent constantly multiplying, England could devote a larger number of ships and men to the American theater. After hearing of the loss of the Argus, Madison cautiously asked Jones, "Would it be amiss to instruct such crews positively never to fight where they can avoid it, and employ themselves entirely in destroying the commerce of the Enemy. There would be but one motive under the relative circumstances of the two nations to encounter armed ships, and that is extinguished by the ample proof already given of the nautical talents and signal prowess of our naval commanders and seamen."[11] The Secretary of the Navy saw the wisdom of Madison's

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10. W. Jones to J. Madison, May 10, 1814, JMP.

11. J. Madison to W. Jones, October 15, 1813, UCSC.

suggestion and communicated it to his captains. "It is not even good policy to meet an equal, unless under special circumstances where a great object is to be gained without sacrifice. His commerce is our true game, for there he is indeed vulnerable."[12]

William Jones had carefully studied the trade routes of the world in his years of experience at sea, first on a naval vessel and later on merchantmen. His opinions on the most effective cruising grounds were based on this knowledge and on the fighting capabilities of the United States' vessels. Even before being named Secretary of the Navy, Jones had been asked by William Bainbridge for "his ideas on a plan of cruising."[13] Jones' answer was a detailed estimate of where a United States ship would be most likely to have success. He listed six possible areas for consideration. The first was off the east coast of Florida, in the Cape Canaveral region, where a vessel could "intercept with certainty everything from Jamaica through the Gulph and have the port of Georgia and the Carolinas near

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12. W. Jones to J. Rodgers, 1813, quoted in Paullin, John Rodgers, pp. 276-277.

13. W. Bainbridge to W. Jones, October 5, 1812, UCSC.

you." The second area was near Isabella ("the Crooked Island") in the Bahamas. This position would be an ideal one from which to capture "the trades of the East and Jamaica." Also ideal for these purposes was the region "north of Corvo and Flora." A fourth area was off the coast of Portugal where "in all probability" a warship would "fall in with some of the extra India men." The cruising ground that Jones particularly recommended was off the Brazilian coast where the natives were very hospitable to Americans and had ample provisions to supply a ship. On this station a vessel would be able to intercept the valuable British trade with Brazil which was "in a very convenient commodity, viz Gold in Bag and Coin and other compact valuables." From here too the ship would be in position to intercept any merchantmen returning to England round the Horn. The final place suggested was in the Pacific. "A brilliant cruise," Jones wrote, "might no doubt be made in the Indian Seas, but for the distance and absolute deprevation of a single friendly port to refit in case of accidents to which you would be much exposed which together with the dread of disease I ... forbid so hazardous an enterprise."[14]

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14. W. Jones to W. Bainbridge, October 11, 1812, UCSC.

When Jones became the Secretary of the Navy he did not often provide his officers with so many choices, but usually gave them quite specific sailing orders. The day before he left office, he instructed Captain Oliver Hazard Perry to cruise the Mediterranean, Captain Stephen Decatur to go to the East Indies, Captain David Porter to take his ship to the West Indies, and Captain Charles Morris to sail in the Grand Bank. All were to raid the enemy's commerce and destroy the prizes they took as the best way of hurting the English trade.[15] The captains were not happy with such detailed instructions. Many of them felt that they ought to be allowed to pick their own cruising grounds as the advantages of one area might quickly turn into disadvantages. They objected to the Secretary's tight control over what many considered one of the captain's prerogatives.[16]

Jones, however, realized that some degree of control had to be maintained or the nation's naval policy would be meaningless for with each captain cruising where he wanted, large areas of the world might be left uncovered. Although

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15. W. Jones to O. Perry, S. Decatur, D. Porter, and C. Morris, November 30, 1814, lso.

16. Langley, Social Reform, pp. 15-16.

he gave them areas in which to cruise, his supplemental orders were more general. Typical was his closing paragraph to Captain John Smith. "My instructions are comprised in a few words. Take your departure as soon as possible; select the most favorable position according to circumstances or information obtained. Keep the sea as long as possible, capture or destroy the commerce of the enemy to the utmost extent of your power, when your wants compel you to return, approach the coast with caution & attempt the eastern rather than the middle or southern ports."[17]

Coastal defense was of prime importance to the young nation. In the winter of 1813 Jones predicted that the United States would have a "bloody and devastating summer and autumn" ahead. The Secretary predicted the dire consequences yet to be felt from the war, "If the war continues," he wrote, "they [will] doubtless send out a large force and their object will be to destroy our flourishing cities, manufactories and improvements of all kinds, stupidly supposing that this will subdue the country if not subvert our government and institutions. We may suffer much but it is

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17. W. Jones to J. Smith, March 21, 1813, lso.

important that the spirit and energy of this great country can never submit to British domination."[18]

The British blockade of the Atlantic coast was a highly effective part of their strategy. It brought the United States' trade to a standstill. Congressman Joseph Pearson (Federalist, North Carolina) complained that "the entire coasting trade [is] destroyed, ... the planters of Southern and Middle States, finding no markets for their products at home, are driven to the alternate of waggoning it hundreds of miles in search of a precious market ... or permitting it to rot on their hands. Many of these articles which are, or have become by habit,necessary for their comfort, are procured at the most extravagent prices from other sections of the Union."[19] An unidentified but "distinguished" naval officer said "No sooner had the enemy blockaded our harbors and extended his line of cruisers from New Orleans to Maine, than both foreign and domestic commerce came at once to be reduced to a deplorable state of stagnation; producing in its consequences the utter ruin of many respectable merchants, as well as a great multitude besides connected with them in

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18. W. Jones to W. Young, winter,1813, UCSC.

19. A/C, 13th Congress, 3d Session, XXVII, 1451.

their mercantile pursuits."[20]

There was one type of commerce that could always get through the blockade. The English encouraged American merchantmen to trade with the British armies in Europe or in North America. American ships destined for trade with English merchants could always receive a permit from the British admiral. On July 29, 1813, Jones called attention to the "palpable and criminal intercourse held with the enemy's forces blockading and invading the waters of the United States."

> This intercourse is not only carried on by foreigners, under the specious garb of friendly flags, who convey provisions, water, and succors of all kinds (ostensibly destined for friendly ports, in the face, too, of a declared and vigorous blockade), direct to the fleets and stations of the enemy, with constant intelligence of our naval and military force and preparation, ... but the same traffic, intercourse, and intelligence is carried on with great subtlety and treachery by profligate citizens, who, in vessels ostensibly navigating our own waters, from port to port, find means to convey succors or intelligence to the enemy, & elude the penalty of law.[21]

The navy was never able to permanently stifle this commerce. On September 29, 1813, Jones ordered William Bainbridge to

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20. Niles' Weekly Register, VIII (June 17, 1815), 265.

21. Quoted in Niles' Weekly Register, IV (August 7, 1813), 370.

send two gunboats to the Merrimack River, a notorious center for this trade, to stop it "by whatever means are necessary."[22] The effects these particular efforts may have had are not recorded.

The nation's first, and virtually only, naval reliance for coastal defense was the gunboats originally built under Jefferson. By an act of Congress of March 30, 1812, all gunboats, except those needed on the coast in places most exposed to attack, were to be laid up.[23] Nevertheless there had been no concerted effort to lay up any of them before Jones took over. The new Secretary thought the gunboats were "sluggish in their movements & are not calculated either to pursue or retreat with celerity their best use is at anchor in a favorable situation, commanding the channel, in the direction of the approach of the enemy."[24] He knew it would be impossible for the navy to man the more than one hundred gunboats still in existence and proposed only limited dispersion. In a letter to his brother, Captain Lloyd Jones, William wrote,

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22. W. Jones to W. Bainbridge, September 29, 1813, lsc.

23. Charles W. Goldsborough, The United States Naval Chronicle (Washington, 1824), I, 329.

24. W. Jones to A. Murray, March 20, 1813, lso.

> I am making my arrangements for the reduction and apportionment of the Gun Boats throughout the Union. They are now scattered about in every creek and corner as receptacles of idleness and objects of waste and extravagance without utility.
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> I intended to keep in commission & distributed according to nature and importance of the several stations, viz
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> |---|---|
> | In New York . . . . . | 15 |
> | Delaware . . . . . | 5 |
> | Chesapeake . . . . . | 14 |
> | Georgia . . . . . | 6 |
> | New Orleans . . . . . | 8 |
>
> all the rest are to be laid up at the several stations, in ordinary so as to be ready for service upon an emergency relying upon volunteers to man and defend themselves, for the whole funds of government would not defend every point of our extensive coast.[25]

The Secretary requested and received a law from Congress (March 3, 1813) which would allow the President to dispose of as many of the gunboats as were no longer necessary.[26] The leading nineteenth century authority on naval strategy, Alfred T. Mahan, saw the value of the gunboats in "the caution imposed upon the enemy by the apprehension of what they might effect, did this or that combination of circumstances occur. That the circumstances actually almost never arose detracted little from this moral influence."[27] The Navy

25. W. Jones to L. Jones, February 27, 1813, UCSC.

26. Goldsborough, Naval Chronicle, I, 329.

27. Mahan, War of 1812, II, 164.

Department kept the gunboats it had until February 27, 1815, when Congress authorized the President to sell all of them.[28]

The federal government, however, was not free to act as it desired in regard to coastal defense. If Jones had had his own way, he would have assigned heavy naval protection to the more important ports and allowed those less likely to receive enemy incursions, due to their lack of industry or facilities, to fend for themselves. "Complete protection is out of the question," he said "where their ships-of-the-line and frigates can go and protect their tenders and boats these depredations must be expected. But are we to abandon the defence of our waters and harbors? No but the defences of a port must bear its due proportion to the whole and in the ratio of its exposure and importance."[29] No matter how wise and fair these ideas may have been, the people most directly concerned, those inhabiting coastal areas, were not entirely pleased. Jones complained to the President that, "I have had a great deal of correspondence with corporations and committees from Maine to Georgia which I did not think necessary to trouble you with. It became

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28. Goldsborough, Naval Chronicle, I, 329.

29. W. Jones to ?, April 5, 1813, UCSC.

my duty to resist their claims and I believe I have addressed arguments and reasoning which has satisfied most of them. I consider it indispensable to resist the pretensions of local bodys [sic] who undertake to prescribe not only the extent but the nature and manner of employing the public force."[30]

Resisting such local pretentions, however, was often very difficult. Persons with powerful influence frequently prevailed upon the Secretary for more vessels. In Boston the local populace blockaded Bainbridge's fleet in the harbor for fear that he would leave and reduce them to a state of defenselessness. When Bainbridge asked Jones for instructions on this matter, the Secretary advised the captain to proceed slowly to allow the citizens of Boston time to return to their senses.[31]

The great, vulnerable, inner waterway of the United States was the Chesapeake Bay. As Mahan later noted, its waters offer "a great central district, with interior lines, in the hands of a great power to which belongs the initiative,

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30. W. Jones to J. Madison, June 6, 1813, JMP.

31. W. Jones to W. Bainbridge, July 16, 1814, lsc.

with an overpowering mobile force, able at any moment to appear where it will in superior strength."[32] To defend this great, vital area was an important part of Jones' job. Joshua Barney suggested a new type of ship, a shallow galley, which could move in light winds or in a calm and attack the enemy while he could not return an effective fire.[33] But the department simply did not have the funds to build more vessels for the Chesapeake.

The national capital itself was located on the Potomac River which flowed into the bay. It was captured on August 24, 1814. As Jones later admitted, his "own impressions inclined him to the opinion that there were some points more exposed, less difficult of access, and more inviting to the enemy, upon the system of warfare he had adopted, than the metropolis; the only important objects which it presented, according to my view, being the naval depot and public shipping."[34] He was not the only cabinet member who doubted England's intention to attack Washington. John Armstrong was directly responsible for defending the capital;

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32. Mahan, War of 1812, II, 26.

33. J. Barney to W. Jones, July 4, 1813, JMP.

34. ASP, Military Affairs, I, 540.

his failure to anticipate an attack on the city, and make preparations to defend it, cost him his job. Yet even if Jones had thought an attack was imminent he could not have done much more than he did. He said that he had three twelve-pound cannons and two long eighteen-pounders taken off ships and mounted on field carriages, that he had told the marines to be prepared to act as field artillerists, and that he gave Commodore Joshua Barney orders to act in concert with the land forces in case of an attack.[35] Jones also revealed that Madison had pressed him to defend the capital, but he took full responsibility for misinterpreting the plans of the enemy.

Jones did prepare for the defense of Washington, but was honest enough to admit that he still doubted an attack would be mounted. "I accorded in the expediency of the preparations," he wrote, "but must confess that I was not equally impressed with the apprehension of immediate danger, as well as from the reasons I have before assigned, as from the then existing fact, that the force of the enemy, in the

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35. ASP, Military Affairs, I, 532.

waters of the Chesapeake was entirely naval, and apparently were satisfactorily engaged in conflagrating farm houses, and depredating upon slaves and tobacco, on the shores of the Patuxent."[36]

The residents of Baltimore assailed the Secretary of the Navy for protection more than those of any other city. In the first half of 1813, he had to constantly reassure the people of this important port that they would receive adequate protection. Senator Samuel Smith, an influential Republican of that city, warned Jones that, "The enemy is drawing near to us and when too late you will regret not having had Look Out vessels down the Bay. The value of Vessels lost in the river Rappahanock [sic] would have amply paid for the hire of Boats. This port is very illy prepared against the attack of an enemy. I have done all in my power."[37] Smith, through his constant besieging, forced Jones into action. Although Jones felt that Baltimore was "one of the most secure [ports] in the U. S.,"[38] the commotion in the city would not die down. In an attempt to

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36. ASP, Military Affairs, I, 540.

37. S. Smith to W. Jones, April 8, 1813, United States Department of the Navy, "Miscellaneous Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy" (File microcopy of records in the National Archives: no. 124). Hereafter abbreviated as lrm.

38. S. Smith to W. Jones, April 9, 1813, lrm. C. Gordon to W. Jones, March 13, 1813, lrc. W. Jones to C. Gordon, March 15, 1813, lso.

reassure Smith and the people of Baltimore, the Secretary went to the city. "My visit has produced a good effect," he reported to Madison, "our friends at Baltimore are particularly gratified by the arrangements I have made [to buy four schooners to protect the port], and those who are not of that character appear satisfied."[39] Yet it was mainly due to the efforts of Senator (and Major General) Samuel Smith that the important port was saved. Smith had cajoled Brigadier General William H. Winder, the nominal commander of the tenth military district which included Washington and Baltimore, to turn over the command of the city's defenses to him. Commodores John Rodgers, David Porter, and Oliver Hazard Perry, idled by the blockade, directed their sailors to handle the shore guns, man the gunboats, and erect fortifications. The people of Baltimore rallied to their general's preparations. The determined stand of the militia to protect their city, augmented by regulars, both navy and army, saved Baltimore. Maryland regiments held at the forward positions. The one and a half

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39. W. Jones to J. Madison, April 17, 1813, JMP.

hour battle cost the enemy over 300 men and their commanding general, Robert Ross, and they withdrew.[40] Jones was always bitter about Baltimore's demands. After the British had been successfully stopped, the city wanted the regulars to remain for future protection. In an inaccurate, sour, and shortsighted letter to his wife, Jones complained,

> Indeed it was owing to the confidence and animation they [Commodore Rodgers' squadron] inspired as well as their heroism that Baltimore was saved--without them it would have fallen and Phila. also, yet all this is owing to my early and efficient arrangements, not those which duty required for no duty required me to convert the seamen into soldiers and march them from place to place as substituted for the want of regular troops. Yet after all I am this day perhaps execrated in Baltimore for sending Rodgers and his men to the Delaware although the danger has subsided.[41]

Other cities also complained of the lack of naval defense. New York and Philadelphia seemed to have been the only two ports satisfied with their situation, or willing to do something themselves to ameliorate their positions. Both provided local militia to man some of the unused gunboats. Isaac Hull wrote to Jones that the citizens of Portsmouth were beleaguering him for additional aid as they felt

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40. See Coles, War of 1812, pp. 182-186.

41. W. Jones to E. Jones, September 20 or 21, 1814, UCSC.

an attack was imminent.[42] Norfolk's citizens complained to Jones who admitted that "it has been impossible to get men sufficient for the Gun Boats there but if they were all manned and the enemy is determined to make the sacrifice it would make no difference."[43] Jones had to send letters to Governor Joseph Alston of South Carolina and George Jones, mayor of Savannah, assuring them that the department was doing all in its power to protect their concerned citizens.[44] Again and again the Secretary had to tell individuals that the department was aware of their problems and that it would do all it could to protect their interests. He was forced to reiterate the theme that those places needed proteotion the most had priority. In a typical reply, he wrote, "While the Southern Coast may be exposed to occasional depredations, ... the Waters & Shores of the Chesapeake, Delaware, New York and Rhode Island are actually invested with a formidable naval force, which is daily committing the most wanton

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42. I. Hull to W. Jones, May 11, 1814, JMP.

43. W. Jones to E. Jones, March 21, 1813, UCSC.

44. W. Jones to J. Alson, September 24, 1814; W. Jones to G. Jones, April 23, 1813. United States Department of the Navy, "Miscellaneous Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy, 1798-1886" (File Microcopy of records in the National Archives: no. 209). Hereafter abbreviated as lsm.

depredations and that the increase of our forces at those scenes of action, necessarily prevents its extension to places comparatively exempt from these calamities and in a great degree secured by the natural impediments to the approach of an enemy."[45]

Possibly the nation's most important naval strategy had to be designed for the northern frontier. The United States' land forces had proved their inability to take Canada, and the English did not try to invade the United States from Canada until 1814. Most observers realized that unrestricted naval control of the Great Lakes would mean victory for one side or the other. Mahan most succinctly and accurately observed the importance of naval superiority on the Lakes. "From Lake Superior to the head of the first rapid of the St. Lawrence, ..., the control of the water was the decisive factor in the general military situation. ... Naval superiority determined the ability to cross above the rapids, and there was no occasion to consider the question of crossing between them. Immediately below the last lay Montreal, accessible to sea-going vessels from the

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45. W. Jones to W. Ross, April 28, 1813, lsm.

ocean. To that point, therefore, the sea power of Great Britain reached, and there it ended."[46]

Very early, Jones had given explicit instructions on the Great Lakes policy to Commodore Isaac Chauncey. Almost immediately after taking office, he communicated his ideas on naval strategy for the Lakes to his Great Lakes' commander. The letter he wrote confirmed the already existing naval policy on the Lakes, and once again gave an indication of Jones' unwarranted faith in what this policy should achieve. First, Jones provided evidence of his belief at that time in the importance of the Great Lakes' frontier. "It is impossible to attach too much importance to our naval operations on the Lakes--the success of the ensuing campaign will depend absolutely on our superiority on all the Lakes--& every effort and resource must be directed to that object." He then called Chauncey's attention to the need for our absolute control of the upper lakes. He advised building a separate naval force on Lake Erie which would "facilitate beyond calculation the operations of Genl. Harrisons army."

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46. Mahan, War of 1812, I, 303.

He seemed to have no doubt that this land campaign would be successful. Chauncey's force would then be able to move into Lake Huron where it would "intercept the supplies for the western Indians." He noted that "It is this commanding position which gives to the Enemy the absolute control of the Indians." The naval force on Lake Huron would enable Chauncey to take Machilimackinac and "command the waters of Lake Michigan." As for Lake Ontario, Jones advised him that the command of the lake "is no less important" and he authorized the Commodore to build "another corvette of such dimensions as you may deem proper. Whatever force the Enemy may create, we must surpass ... Indeed you are to consider the absolute superiority on all the Lakes as the only limit to your authority."[47] This statement was as close as Jones ever came to enunciating any naval strategy. Once again it appears to be more a statement of faith in what Chauncey could and should accomplish than an organized plan of campaign.

Chauncey, never very sure of himself, frequently wrote long letters to Jones explaining his plans in detail.

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47. W. Jones to I. Chauncey, January 27, 1813, lso.

Originally the strategy on the northern frontier had been to attack Kingston, but this was changed in 1813 into an assault on York. With the advantage of historical hindsight, Alfred T. Mahan was able to show that Kingston and not York was the proper object of the navy's attention. He said, "the Canadian tree was rooted in the ocean, where it was nourished by the sea power of Great Britain. To destroy it, failing the ocean navy which the United States had not, the trunk must be severed; the nearer the root the better."[48] The strategy, as originally worked out by Secretary of War Armstrong, was that the main attack should be against Montreal. Due to adverse weather, however, the campaign could start six weeks earlier by an attack on Kingston. The President approved this plan. Armstrong sent orders to Major General Henry Dearborn who was in command of the military forces on the Lake Ontario frontier to proceed against Kingston as the first objective with secondary alternatives in York and Forts George and Erie; Montreal was never mentioned. Dearborn and Chauncey conferred and the

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48. Mahan, War of 1812, II, 35.

two commanders decided that Kingston was too strong for a direct assault thus leaving York as the desired objective.[49] Chauncey provided his reasons for advising this change in a long letter to Jones. The Commodore believed that the enemy "possessing the means of obtaining the most accurate information from this side" would be expecting an attack on Kingston. His idea was to let the British continue to believe it as this "will oblige the Enemy to concentrate his forces at Kingston and have the effect of preventing re-enforcements from being sent to the upper part of the province, and eventually facilitate our main object [i.e. Kingston]." The new objective was now to be York which Chauncey said "can be accomplished without loss on our part and will have the effect of giving us the complete command of this Lake." Chauncey hoped that this action would draw the enemy out of Fort George so that by quickly reembarking the American troops at York the British fort could easily be taken. The successful capture of Fort George should turn the entire Niagara frontier over to the United States. From this point Chauncey proposed to move into Lake Erie "destroy their naval

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49. See Coles, War of 1812, pp. 135-137.

power there as soon as possible, attack and take Malden and Detroit, & proceed to Lake Huron and attack & carry Machilimackinac at all hazards." The loss of the Upper Lakes would force the enemy to concentrate around Kingston and Montreal, but with America's proven superiority, we could "bring nearly the whole of our force (naval as well as military) to act upon any one point."[50]

Jones enthusiastically agreed with Chauncey's change of plans and wrote to Madison praising the man and his new plan. "I have pleasure in sending the enclosed letters which show that Commodore Chauncey has determined upon the course which you were so solicitous he should have done, and has thereby in my mind greatly elevated his character as perhaps there are few naval officers who would have resisted the temptation to exalt their fame."[51] Here again is evidence that Jones was sitting on the sideline watching the naval strategy evolve around him rather than formulating it himself.

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50. I. Chauncey to W. Jones, March 18, 1813, lrc.

51. W. Jones to J. Madison, June 21, 1813, JMP.

While the contest on Lake Ontario developed into one of building and not fighting, it was different on Lake Erie. Here Oliver Hazard Perry ventured onto the lake and defeated his enemy in detail on September 10, 1813. "The destruction of the British naval force decided the campaign in the Northwest by transferring the control of the water. Its general military results were in this respect final. Nothing occurred to modify them during the rest of the war."[52] Jones, however, had taken little interest in Commodore Perry and always dealt with him through Chauncey, commander of the entire Lake force. The Secretary, of course, was elated over the victory on Erie and sent his congratulations to Perry.

In the spring of 1814 the world situation had changed abruptly. Paris fell to the allies on March 31, and the Emperor of France abdicated four days later. Jones wrote his thoughts on this to the President, "Though gratified to see the ambitions of the despotic ruler of france [sic] humbled, I consider the subjugation of that great empire as one of the greatest calamities that has ever befalled [sic] the civilized world." The end of the war on the Continent

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52. Mahan, War of 1812, II, 99.

gave England an opportunity to pursue the war in America with renewed vigor. Seasoned veterans were expected to arrive in Canada soon, and Jones despaired. "My mind is made up for the worst and my consolation is that whatever disasters we may sustain, the vindictive desperation of the enemy will unite and purify the country and I trust enable us to sustain the conflict and preserve our institutions undefiled."[53]

The knowledge of the fall of Napoleon was one of the reasons why Jones had urged a defensive strategy on the Lakes. He wrote to the President suggesting that the ocean was where the American navy should meet the enemy. On the northern frontier "one fourth of our naval force [is] employed for the defence of a wilderness, while our Atlantic frontier--our flourishing cities town & villages, cultivated farms, rising manufactories, public works & edifices; are deprived of the services & protection of this valuable body of men, the loss of whom by any casualty would be to the nation a deep calamity." He was humble in offering these opinions,

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53. W. Jones to J. Madison, May 18, 1814, JMP. On the fall of Napoleon, see Geoffrey Bruun, Europe and the French Imperium (New York, 1938), pp. 189-197.

and stated that he hoped Madison would "receive them for what they are worth." He further said that the nation's military failures on the Lakes had caused him to conclude that our position there can only be "purely defensive." He assured Madison nevertheless that "Not the slightest relaxation has taken or shall take place in this Department and all that could or can be done has and will be done."[54]

During the summer of 1814 an American force was growing on Lake Champlain. Here Commodore Thomas Macdonough was preparing a fleet to meet a contemplated enemy invasion down the centuries-old Richelieu-Champlain corridor. It was during the building of this fleet that the President directly interceded and for the only time during the war changed a decision made by Jones. The events on Lake Champlain in the summer of 1814 made a sea battle inevitable. Commodore Macdonough was not satisfied with his squadron and suggested that a larger vessel than the seventeen-gun schooner, the Ticonderoga, was needed. The Secretary had written a general report on the navy to Madison on May 6, 1814, in which he said, "I do not anticipate anything to disturb

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54. W. Jones to J. Madison, May, 1814, UCSC.

our complete controul on Lake Champlain. Our superiority will not be placed beyond doubt indeed there is good reason to believe the enemy will not venture on the Lake."[55] Whatever gave Jones this idea is hard to say. He knew that by this time the British had a brig, named the Linnet, and were building a small frigate and several gunboats. Still, he gave to the Secretary of War in June "an explicit declaration that he would not add to the naval means on Lake Champlain as suggested by Commodore McDonough in his letters of the 8th & 11th ultimo."[56] By the end of June, however, Madison had spoken with Jones and a new ship was to be begun.[57]

Adam and Noah Brown, the builders who had turned out the Ticonderoga in thirty-five days, were ordered back to Vergennes to build a twenty-four-gun brig which was to be named the Eagle. "Fifty-five days after the letter ordering them to build the brig had been written in Washington, Macdonough fought the battle of Plattsburg, with his new

55. W. Jones to J. Madison, May 6, 1814, JMP.

56. J. Armstrong to G. Izard, July 2, 1814. United States Department of War, "Letters Sent by the Secretary of War, Military Affairs" (File microcopy of records in the National Archives: no. 6).

57. Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, p. 273.

brig in line of battle, for Brown launched the Surprise [renamed the Eagle] exactly nineteen days after he had arrived at Vergennes."[58] Jones, it seems, was more concerned about money in this instance than strategy, for on July 30, 1814, he confessed to the President that, "I almost regret commencing the new ship at Vergennes. God knows where the money is to come from!"[59] The Eagle was built by funds from somewhere and it is to Madison's credit that the brig was launched. It should be noted, however, that once the President had decided upon this course of action, he let his Secretary of the Navy handle all activities connected with it, a further indication of Madison's complete trust in Jones. Macdonough's victory stopped Britain's only real invasion of the United States from Canada. Secretary Jones, shortly after hearing of the outcome of this decisive battle, exclaimed, "to view it in the abstract, it is not surpassed by any naval victory of record; to appreciate its results, it is perhaps, one of the most important events in the history of our country."[60] The British also recognized the

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58. Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, p. 298.

59. W. Jones to J. Madison, July 30, 1814, JMP.

60. ASP, Naval Affairs, I, 309.

importance of the American victories on the lakes. Late in 1814, the Duke of Wellington proclaimed that, "I have told the ministers repeatedly that a naval superiority on the Lakes is a sine qua non of success in war on the frontier of Canada--even if our object should be wholly defensive."[61]

While the war was being won on Lakes Erie and Champlain, the two opposing commanders on Lake Ontario seemed to be engaged in a naval race that was leading nowhere. As Jones himself said, "the Naval contest on Lake Ontario has become a warfare of Dockyards and arsenals."[62] At times the Secretary seemed to despair when he considered that "one fourth of our naval force" was employed upon Lake Ontario "for the defence of a wilderness," yet he was willing to continue the seemingly endless race so long as the nation's resources could support it.[63] On October 24, 1814, he told Chauncey that he still had "the most perfect reliance on your skill, judgment and patriotism" and seemed never to lack confidence that ultimately the United States would achieve

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61. Quoted in H. Adams, History of the United States of America, VIII, 113.

62. W. Jones to J. Madison, October 26, 1814, UCSC.

63. W. Jones to J. Madison, May, 1814, UCSC.

a decisive victory on Lake Ontario.[64] Two days after this letter, knowing that he would soon be retiring, the Secretary wrote to the President warning him that greater efforts would have to be called upon to insure an eventual victory on Lake Ontario since a defeat in that quarter was strategically impossible to comprehend. He cautioned Madison that further exertions and expenses were necessary on Lake Ontario before the long-sought victory would be won.

> As the Naval contest on Lake Ontario has become a warfare of Dockyards and arsenals, it may be well to examine with candour the relative capacity, resources, and facilities, of the combatants, to obtain their respective objects within the time limited. We seem to forget that we are at war with the most potent Naval power in the world, whose depots and workshops are full of all kinds of munitions, and equipments, which he may transport without interruption from the Ocean to Lake Ontario, at less time, and at one fourth of the expense, that we can transport similar stores from Washington to New York. ... If we have hitherto maintained a vacillating superiority on Lake Ontario, by the greatest exertion and most serious application of narrow means, that has ever been witnessed, we ought not to delude ourselves with the belief that these can be extended indefinitely, or we may perchance find their limitation in disaster, and useless expenditure.
>
> There is a point beyond which it will be admitted, we cannot proceed, and we know that our enemy may create as many ships of the line on Lake

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64. W. Jones to I. Chauncey, October 24, 1814, JMP.

> Ontario as his policy shall require, and so long as we shall maintain the competition, he will have the strongest motives to persevere, because by so doing he must ultimately and soon lock up all our disposible seamen, and thus free his commerce from depredations on the ocean, his flag from further humiliation, and expose our maritime frontier, its incalculable vexation and pillage, in consequence of the absence of the seamen on the Lakes.[65]

The two combatants never did meet on Lake Ontario. Mahan felt that the chief reason for this was "the extreme wariness of the commanders, each of whom was deeply impressed with the importance of preserving his own fleet, in order not to sacrifice control of the lake."[66] In addition to this, Mahan maintained that because of the absence of an immediate tactical need to control the lake, Sir James Yeo, the British commander, and Commodore Chauncey never brought their fleets together; thus no decisive battle was fought on Lake Ontario--the battle which all knew could decide the outcome of the entire war.

The President and the commanders on the spot exerted a greater control over our naval strategy than did Jones.

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65. W. Jones to J. Madison, October 26, 1814, JMP.

66. Mahan, War of 1812, II, 52.

Jones' actions seemed to be limited to approving the decisions that had already been made. No evidence exists that he ever initiated any significant strategic decisions. His advice was that of a manager. He decided how much of the navy was to be allotted to the various strategic areas, based on what resources he could spare. He also selected the ports which were to be most heavily defended, and how much of the nation's resources were to go into the fleets building on the Lakes. There is no extant correspondence between Madison and Jones which indicates that the latter had any control over the nation's naval policies. Jones was an administrator and not a strategist. Approving what had already been decided, he moved the men and materials that were necessary to complete a job. Thus the decisions being made on the nation's naval strategy were not entrusted to the Secretary of the Navy. Jones was told what had been approved and was expected to execute these policies with whatever resources he commanded, but at no time was he given permission, nor did he ever seek to formulate naval strategy on his own. His expertise was directed toward accomplishing the tasks created for him by the President who was the ultimate source of America's strategy in the War of 1812.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONNEL

Personnel concerned William Jones as the Secretary of the Navy. Jones was by nature taciturn and direct. As Secretary he had to correspond with every captain and many subordinate officers as well. In one month (June, 1813) he sent 51 letters to captains alone and corresponded besides with agents, pursers, commandants, lower officers, and the civilians who wrote to him. Many of these letters were composed by clerks from Jones' notes, but he still had to read all the incoming mail and answer many of the more important letters himself.

His official correspondence was usually short and direct. This was due not only to the clerks who composed these letters from his notes, but to his lack of time. He wasted little effort on perfunctory salutations. When he gave an order, he wanted to make sure it was clearly understood. He detailed a commander's duties so that the

man could not claim ignorance at a later date. Typical of his correspondence was a letter to Daniel J. Patterson:

> The first step required of you will be a comprehensive and accurate report of the number, force, state, and condition of all the vessels under your command, and a correct muster role of all the officers and men, ...
>
> You are to understand, explicitly, that no vessels are to be purchased, or built; nor any extensive repairs to be made, without the previous approbation of this Department; unless such repairs as may arise from casualty, and are not admitting of delay, without manifest injury to the service.
>
> You will also report to me, such supplies as you deem necessary for the station, for the ensuing year, of a nature not to be obtained on favourable terms on the spot, taking into view, those on board the Squadron at the time, and in the hands of the Agent. You will also take care that the Purser makes his regular, periodical returns to this Department according to instructions.[1]

Government in the early nineteenth century, as in present times, was a dispenser of favors. Jones' office was besieged by individuals who wanted something for themselves or for their friends. Requests to appoint some deserving young man to be a midshipman were especially numerous. Messrs. Rinney and Ronaldson of Philadelphia submitted a typical request for a midshipman's warrant for

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1. W. Jones to D. Patterson, October 18, 1813, lso.

William Paddock. They explained that the youth had had experience at sea which was combined with a great zeal. The men apologized for the excessive length of communication, but justified it by noting that, "our anxiety to serve a deserving Man, and to place in a situation, in which he is most likely to be serviceable, one of our Country's gallant defenders, has drawn it to a greater length than we intended."[2] By the end of the war, "the files of the department showed that upwards of one thousand youths had been disappointed."[3] Also disappointed were the numerous unemployed merchant captains who wanted command of a naval vessel.

In addition to this overwhelming number of bids for initial appointment, were letters seeking promotion. These inevitably complained that a fellow officer, holding a commission with a date inferior to theirs, had been promoted ahead of them. The Secretary of the Navy was particularly irked by such letters. He knew that promotions had to be based on something more than a man's length-of-service. In a letter to Lieutenant Robert Spence stationed

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2. Rinney & Ronaldson to W. Jones, January 25, 1813, UCSC.

3. Paullin, "Naval Administration," p. 1320.

at Baltimore, he stated, "the rule of Seniority is not absolute," and then discussed those qualities which would guarantee promotion.

> The inherent inequality of man, demonstrates the absurdity of indiscriminate claims to this vital trust. Again, gallant and distinguished actions, have an indubitable claim to precedence, even where the merits of officers may, in other respects, be equal. Were it not so, the best stimulus to noble deeds would be destroyed. But others are equally brave, and pant only for the opportunity!--true; but it is the use of opportunity, that develops the real character of an officer, and equality must yield the palm to him, whom hard earned victory crowns.[4]

Jones soon realized that something would have to be done to organize the requests for appointment and promotion surging into his office. He ordered all commanders to report on their officers at the end of a cruise, or if on shore station, on July 4. He also ordered that no more acting midshipmen would be appointed "without the previous authority of this Department" unless it was in an emergency at sea, and, in such a case, the appointment would cease "two months after the arrival of the acting officer within the United States unless confirmed by the Department."

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4. W. Jones to R. Spence, July 26, 1813, lso.

Furthermore, in an effort to collect all the vital information on officers, or applicants to office, he organized a file to be maintained on all officers. There was to be a form with six parts which he hoped would make a ready reference for future use. After the officer's name, would come: (1) the date of his warrant or commission; (2) age; (3) constitutional and mental qualifications; (4) arguments in writing to include grammar, arithmetic, mathematics, and nautical astronomy; (5) actual service and nautical experience; and (6) "moral and general character in all the essential requisites of an accomplished officer."[5] Captain William Bainbridge complained to Jones about the restrictions which the Secretary had placed upon him. "In your letter of the 18th ult. you take away the power from Commanders of Stations and Squadrons of appointing any acting commissions or Warrant officer, or of transferring said class of officers. It is a power, when the situation of my Rank has enabled me to exercise it," that has resulted in the obtaining of a number of superior naval officers.

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5. Memo of W. Jones, April, 1813, UCSC.

Furthermore, Bainbridge continued, the commander of a station would be the best judge of an officer's qualifications.[6] Jones, however, was not swayed by these arguments, and he instituted the new system by departmental order.

Jones recognized that the rank of admiral would not only be advantageous, but it was necessary as well. It was necessary so that senior American naval officers could more effectively deal with army generals who tended to look upon navy captains or commodores as subordinate to themselves in joint operations. Furthermore, Jones felt that such a high rank would be advantageous to the service because it would stimulate the senior captains. In a report to the Senate Naval Committee, he elaborated upon these views.

> Love of country, and the laudable desire of honourable fame are strong excitements to noble action; but the prospect of progressive promotion to the highest distinction which talents, zeal, and valor, may justly aspire to, is not perhaps less active and stimulating.
>
> Captains of long and honorable standing in the Navy cannot but contrast the cheerless prospect of promotion in the naval service, with the rapid and high distinction to which their military brethren, with equal, but not higher pretensions, have attained.[7]

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6. W. Bainbridge to W. Jones, September 2, 1813, UCSC.

7. A/C, 13th Congress, 3d Session, XXVIII, 115-116.

The Senate committee quickly responded to Jones' request and, within two weeks, issued a favorable report. It submitted two resolutions to the Senate regarding rank on November 28, 1814. The first said "That it is expedient to authorize by law the appointment of officers above the grade of captain in the Navy of the United States," and the second, "Resolved, That it is inexpedient, at this time, to make any provision for conferring naval rank by brevet."[8] Unfortunately, for the naval officers, Congress did not agree with its committee, so the rank of admiral was not created until the Civil War.

Secretary Jones received many requests for other favors than promotions. Probably the most numerous of the non-promotion type were applications for a pension. Sometimes these came from men who had served in the navy and felt that they deserved retirement or disability benefits, but, more often, from surviving widows or relatives left without support. One woman asked for her late brother's pension because "owing to the unfortunate death of her Brother, she is left destitute with ... orphan infants, consequently,

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8. A/C, 13th Congress, 3d Session, XXVIII, 115.

helpless, that with the assistance of him prior to his death, her situation was comfortable, but now truly requires assistance."[9]

Officers often requested new assignments. They usually asked for stations where some fighting was likely to occur. Shipbuilders, carpenters, and other artificers requested work on a new vessel or even one that was only rumored or contemplated. More unusual was the petition from two brothers each asking for a furlough "for the purpose of improving my education."[10] Educational deferments are not something unique in the twentieth century. One of the most audacious requests came from Captain Thomas Truxtun, Jones' former commander, who asked for information on the peace overtures in Europe so that he might make some money by speculations. "I have the remains of a hard earned fortune." Truxtun wrote, "If you can consistently give me an opinion, confidential or otherwise, as to the probability of a continuance of the war, or a Speedy peace, I shall be obliged, as I may continue holding those stocks, or forcing a Sale accordingly." No answer to this letter is included

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9. A. Betton to W. Jones, August 19, 1813, lrm.

10. A. Browne & T. Browne to W. Jones, October 26, 1813. United States Department of the Navy, "Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Officers below the Rank of Commander, 1802-1884" (File microcopy of letters in the National Archives: no. 148). Hereafter abbreviated as lro.

in Jones' correspondence. The strangest plea came from Commodore Isaac Chauncey concerning his brother, who was a lieutenant in the navy. The commodore asked Jones to place his brother "upon the shelf for about twelve months." Apparently Lieutenant Chauncey was a cocky, young naval officer "extremely tenacious of what he conceives his rank and rights" and the senior Chauncey thought such discipline would "perhaps save a young man from ruin." Jones, however, made no reply to this letter.[11]

Jones knew that in order to maintain an efficient Navy Department his own command must be effective. The very nature of the department encouraged bureaucratic anarchy. On May 10, 1813, he decided to stop junior officers from communicating directly to him, and wrote to Captain Hugh Campbell, "The frequent application of officers on different stations to this Department is attended with much trouble and inconveience. I, therefore, request you to make ... to all officers under your command that they must correspond with the Navy Department only through their commanding officer."[12] He refused to respond to any letters

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11. T. Truxtun to W. Jones, September 12, 1813; I. Chauncey to W. Jones, July 10, 1814; UCSC.

12. W. Jones to H. Campbell, May 10, 1813, lso.

from junior officers received after the summer of 1813.

His attempt to control the department more effectively brought Jones into direct conflict with the hitherto unbridled freedom exercised by some officers. The new Secretary kept a close watch over the department's accounts, and due to the usual lack of money to finance many operations, he was especially wary of extravagant expenses. On March 1, 1813, he told Captain John Cassin at Gosport, Virginia, that all large expenses for "repairs, alterations or improvements" must "receive the approbation of this Department." He concluded this letter by observing that "The enormous and irregular expensives [sic] incurred by this Department at the several Navy Yards and Stations must be corrected, and it is the duty as I trust it will be the inclination of every correct officer to remedy the evil within his sphere of action." A young lieutenant, Charles Grandison, was cashiered for purchasing an unseaworthy hulk and charging it to the department. To him Jones wrote,

> Your irregular and extravagant conduct in the equipment of the Troup, the purchase of which vessel by you was unauthorized, though subsequently sanctioned by this Department under

> the impression that she was a good and valuable vessel, fit for the service of the United States Navy, which a recent survey has not only proved her to be unfit for, but that she is absolutely rotten and worthless after all the enormous sums that have been wasted upon her; together with your neglect to consult with and follow the orders of your Superior, prove you utterly unfit for the station with which you have been honoured. You are, therefore, dismissed from the service of the U.S.

Even senior officers were not exempt from Jones' pryings. He told Captain Charles Stewart that the statements from his last command, the Constitution, were incorrect, and that he must submit a report to the department with an account of the condition of the frigate when he left her. Even though he assured Stewart that "your correctness as an officer and a Gentleman forbids the idea of any portion of the irregularity being attributed to your agency ororder," the tone and language of his letterwere accusatory and implied that the captain had provided negligent care of the vessel.[13]

Jones knew that he was responsible for the navy as a whole and that all of its inefficiencies would be attributed to him. He ran a tight ship and demanded that his subordinates who were in positions of authority do the same.

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13. W. Jones to J. Cassin, March 1, 1813, lsc. W. Jones to C. Grandison, May 1, 1813; W. Jones to C. Stewart, October 12, 1813; lso.

Irregularities brought an inquiry from the Secretary. The commander of the New York gunboat flotilla, Jacob Lewis, was chastised for being too quick to remove his vessels from ordinary to fight imaginary dangers. Jones made it understood that the gunboats were to be taken out of storage only in such "an emergency as shall clearly indicate an immediate attack by the enemy on the harbour of New York." When Captain Charles Stewart of the Constitution returned to port early, Jones wrote, "I do not preceive in the reasons and motive assigned a satisfactory cause for the premature termination of the cruise of the U. S. Ship Constitution under your command." He then proceeded to pick apart Stewart's excuses piece by piece.[14]

Jones gave out praise as sparingly as he distributed criticism freely. Although he remarked to the President and to Perry on the brilliance of the latter's victory on Lake Erie, it was rare to find the Secretary so generous. There was one man to whom he never seemed to show anger, and for whom he had only praise. Considering the light

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14. W. Jones to J. Lewis, April 23, 1813; W. Jones to C. Stewart, April 19, 1814; lso.

in which he is held today, it is surprising to find Jones so enthusiastic about Isaac Chauncey. Apparently he never criticized this man for needless expense or delay even though his command was a costly investment which provided few dividends. There seemed to have been a personal admiration between the verbose commodore and the frugal Secretary. Jones praised Chauncey to his wife in glowing terms which he never used for any other officer. "Chauncey is immortal whether in Heaven! or on earth!" He wrote, "A tremendous battle has taken place we have reason to look for victory but the reverse is also possible. It is an awful moment of suspense. ... I never felt so much interest for a man as I do at this moment feel for the patriot ... Chauncey. He truly deserved victory and life to enjoy it. And I pray Heaven to shield him from harm and mantle him with glory." While the tremendous battle never did occur, Jones retained his admiration for the commodore.[15]

Jones himself held theories on the experiences which would make for a good naval officer. Shortly after leaving the department, he noted the names of the captains who had served under him with esoteric signs to indicate the length

15. W. Jones to E. Jones, October 6, 1813, UCSC.

and quality of their service. In the following list, those names "marked thus -- were brought up in the merchant service. Those marked thus // were brought up principally in the navy ... Those marked thus * have been distinguished by brilliant and decisive victories. Those marked thus X have been beyond the capes of Good Hope or Horn previous to the late war."

--Alexander Murray
--James Barron
--Hugh Campbell
--Thomas Tingey X
--Isaac Hull *
--John Shaw X
//John N. Dent
--John Cassin
//Charles Gordon
//James Lawrence *
//Joseph Tarbell
//Oliver Hazard Perry *
//Lewis Warrington *
//William Cramer
//James F. Leonard
//Charles G. Ridgeley X
//Daniel J. Patterson
--John Rodgers
--William Bainbridge*
//Stephen Decatur*
//Charles Stewart*
--Isaac Chauncey X
//John Smith
//David Porter *
--Samuel Evans
//Jacob Jones *
//Charles Morris *
//Arthur Sinclair
//Thomas McDonough *
//Joseph Bainbridge
//Johnston Blakeley *
//James Biddle * X
//Robert T. Spence

In his observations on these officers, Jones remarked that the merchant marine was necessary to the navy because it provided non-active naval personnel with a job in which they could maintain their essential skills. He then summarized his findings in regard to superior officers,

"Of the numerous junior officers who distinguished themselves on subordinate stations in brilliant actions, it is impossible to discriminate between those who were brought up in the Navy and those who had previously served in mercantile ships, but the great majority of the young officers have been brought up in the Navy. There is however a laudable spirit of enterprize which stimulates them to seek active employ in the merchant service during peace by which they become expert Seamen in a short time and return to their profession with great advantage."[16]

While there was a large number of applicants for the position of midshipman, the enlisted ranks were always undermanned. It is hardly surprising to find a lack of volunteers since navy life was hard, authoritarian, and dangerous compared to civilian professions. The tangible benefits of service for an enlisted man were small indeed when contrasted to those of an officer.[17] The common seaman

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16. Memo of William Jones, December, 1814, UCSC.

17. Probably the best example of the difference in ranks is the division of the $255,000 of prize money awarded to the victors on Lake Erie. The commodore (Isaac Chauncey) received $12,750 while the commanders of the two principal vessels, Oliver Hazard Perry and Jesse D. Elliot, got $7,140 (Perry was given an additional $5,000 by act of Congress.) The chaplains, pursers, and gunners were awarded $1,214 and the midshipmen received $811.35. The common seamen, however, were only given $214.99.

earned twelve dollars per month and received one ration, *i.e.* three meals (valued at twenty-eight cents) per day. Compare this to a senior captain who received one hundred dollars per month plus eight rations daily or the lieutenant who got $40 per month plus three daily rations.[18] In addition to his pay the seaman received his food or rations. Officers often took cash in lieu of food, but the sailors were not permitted to do this. The law of March 3, 1801, allotted the following ration for each seaman for one year: 182 pounds of beef, 156 of pork, 52 of flour, 26 of suet, 319 of bread, 20 of cheese, 6½ of butter, and 52 of rice, 6½ gallons of peas, 3¼ of molasses, 3¼ of vinegar, and 22 3/4 of spirits.[19] Needless to say, the food was never fresh, but there was little the men could do about rotten meat or rancid butter while on a cruise.

The only other benefits which seamen received were the use of naval hospitals and the guarantee of a pension. In each case money was taken from the sailors' pay and, in both instances, the United States government made more

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18. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 339-340.

19. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 394.

money from investing these deductions than it had to pay in benefits to the sailors. In the case of the hospitals, the government collected $22,586 from naval personnel (at the rate of twenty cents per man) between October 1, 1812, and September 30, 1814, while in a similar period (February 26, 1811 - September 30, 1812), the total amount expended was only $6,153.35.[20] To be sure, the expenses increased during the war years, but the government still came out ahead. Similarly the pension fund was a money maker. On January 1, 1813, the government held $210,573.58 worth of public or private stocks on account with the navy's pension fund. The stocks annually produced $12,500 for the national coffers. The yearly amount which the pensions cost was $9,287.20. The proceeds from the sale of a captured merchantman were split equally between the nation and the victorious crew. The government's half was turned over to the pension fund and this pillage added an additional $577,578.90 to the fund. By 1816 the nation held $745,024.70 worth of stocks while paying out an average of $20,547.20 per annum in pensions.[21]

20. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 300.

21. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 316.

To receive a pension one had to have been disabled in service and then have his commanding officer fill out a certificate which was sent to the Secretary of the Navy. If approved by the department, the certificate was forwarded to the Secretary of the Treasury who administered the fund. A man,his widow, or his children could receive up to one-half of his regular pay, depending on the type of disability he had suffered.

The naval hospitals, the other benefit guaranteed to sailors, were little better than a very bad joke. There were no permanent hospitals and the temporary ones in the navy yards were usually housed in inadequate buildings. On January 27, 1813, Jones received a letter from the famous Philadelphia physician, Benjamin Rush, with suggestions on some simple improvements for the service hospitals.

> I shall be unhappy until I hear of a revolution in the medical departments of the navy and army. It should by all means extend to both, and it should have a retrospective, as well as a future operation, or it will remedy but half the evils that now afflict and disgrace our naval and military establishments. The objects of my wishes are that no physician or Surgeon

> shall be continued or appointed in the navy, or army who has not graduated as Doctor of Medicine in some University or College, or who has not been examined & approved by a medical board created for that purpose in each of the principal Seaports of the United States.

Secretary Jones often interested himself in the medical care provided by the department. In one instance he wrote to the President suggesting that a gunboat be anchored in Charleston harbor as a hospital ship because he felt the sea air would be good for those who were sick. He doubted that such a facility would work on freshwater lakes or rivers because the "fogs and exhalations are unfriendly to health."[22]

On May 23, 1813, Dr. Edward Cutbush was made the Naval Surgeon at Washington and was given wide authority to improve the existing facilities and to purchase necessary stores.

Although the navy desperately needed enlisted men, its efforts to obtain them were inadequate and haphazard. Officers or agents in the seaports were allowed to recruit

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22. B. Rush to W. Jones, January 27, 1813, UCSC. W. Jones to E. Cutbush, May 23, 1813, lsc. W. Jones to J. Madison, August 15, 1814, JMP.

men at their discretion. The recruits were to serve for two years and, except for the Lakes service which received a bonus of twenty-five percent, were to be offered twelve dollars per month and rations. The total number of seamen allowed to be employed by the act of January 2, 1813, was 2,987 with a total in all ranks of 4,273.[23] Although this was the maximum allowable figure, the emergency conditions of wartime compelled the navy to use more men. On October 26, 1814, Jones reported that there were 6,512 officers and men on the maritime frontier, 3,250 men on the lakes, 450 on the sea, and 405 in prison for a total of 10,617 officers and men in the service.

This figure was further broken down as follows:

Maritime Frontier, viz		
Louisiana	526	
Georgia	259	
South Carolina	398	
North Carolina	197	
Norfolk	696	
Baltimore	800	
Delaware River	702	
New York	1309	
New London	300	
Rhode Island	189	
Boston	636	
Portsmouth	500	
Officers and men total		6512

23. This was broken down into 30 captains, 30 master commandants, 183 lieutenants, 42 surgeons, 32 surgeon's

On the Lakes, Viz		
Champlain	500	
Ontario	2300	
Erie	450	
		3250
On the Sea, viz		
Ship Peacock	160	
Ship Wasp	160	
Brig Siren	130	
		450
In Prison, viz		
Crew of the Argus	130	
Crew of the Frolic	165	
" " Rattlesnake	110	
		405
Officers and men in service		10617 [24]

Officers were always complaining about the difficulty they encountered in enlisting men at their stations. Jones answered Captain John H. Dent of Charleston, "I regret the difficulty of recruiting men for the station under your command, but it is of a nature which cannot be obviated. The number required for the protection of our immensely

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mates, 40 pursers, 9 chaplains, 75 passed midshipmen, 281 midshipmen, 53 sailing masters, 16 boatswains, 18 gunners, 13 carpenters, 11 sailmakers, 1 master's mate, and 452 petty officers. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 337.

24. W. Jones to J. Madison, October 26, 1814, UCSC.

extensive coast and waters, exceeds that which can be procured by voluntary enlistment and we have no other means." By "other means" Jones meant the calling up of militia which the army, but not the navy, was permitted to use. The government had no such power over seamen who, by law, were excluded from the militia. Jones could do nothing; he speculated that if "upon a sudden emergency the Gun Boats in ordinary are ready for service and if volunteers do not offer for temporary service our defenses will be incomplete."[25] The United States had no other choice, it would have to enlist volunteers if it were to man its navy. Yet even volunteers met with some disfavor. Captain Alexander Murray complained that, "Volunteers, I find are not to be depended upon, they are active & willing for a short period, but soon get dissatisfied & come home."[26]

One type of person was, by law, excluded from volunteering his services. The free black man could not serve on a United States ship of war. As with any law, it was evaded.

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25. W. Jones to J. Dent, October 18, 1814, lso. Letter of W. Jones, April 5, 1813, UCSC.

26. A. Murray to W. Jones, September 5, 1814, lrc.

A number of Isaac Hull's sailors on the Constitution were black, and Hull's official report on the engagement with the Guerriere mentions these brave men. "I never had any better fighters than those niggers,--they stripped to the waist, & fought like devils, sir, seeming to be utterly insensible to danger & to be possessed with a determination to outfight white sailors."[27]

Due to the obvious lack of readily obtainable men, the Great Lakes station was always calling for more sailors. The government paid volunteers twenty-five percent more than their non-lakes peers to go there. Chauncey was told that to man the flotilla on Lake Ontario, he could draw upon the resources of New York state and city while the Erie flotilla was to get its men from Pittsburgh.[28] In order to increase the number of men serving on the Lakes, Jones ordered various captains along the northeastern coast to forward some of their sailors to the Lakes. While there were occasional

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27. Quoted in Charles F. Adams, "Wednesday, August 18, 1812, 6:30 P.M.: The Birth of a World Power," American Historical Review, XVIII (April, 1913), 519-520.

28. W. Jones to I. Chauncey, February 11, 1813, lso.

complaints, all sent recruits. In one instance, Jones stipulated that the entire crew, "officers, seamen ordinary, seamen & marines ... of the U.S. Ship Congress should be ordered to the Squadron on Lake Ontario with the utmost possible dispatch."[29] Other vessels which were blockaded in port and could no longer get to sea lost their entire crews to the Great Lakes service. There would never be sufficient men for the Lakes, and some felt that other measures were necessary. Commodore Macdonough suggested that soldiers be permitted to man the oars of the galleys while the sailors would work the guns, or that seamen from the Atlantic squadron be sent directly to him as Chauncey did not seem to be giving him his fair share of recruits.[30] Macdonough was not the only commander who felt that he was being shortchanged by Chauncey. On July 26, 1813, Perry complained to Commodore Chauncey that, "The men that came ...

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29. W. Jones to I. Hull, May 31, 1814, lso.

30. W. Macdonough to W. Jones, March 7, 1814, United States Department of the Navy, "Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanders, 1804-1886" (File microcopy of records in the National Archives: no. 147). Hereafter abbreviated as lrcm.

are a motley set, blacks soldiers and boys. I cannot think you saw them before they were selected." Captain Perry even offered to resign over this episode which he saw as a definite effort on Chauncey's part to frustrate his command.[31] The commodore's reply to his subordinate was curt. "I regret you are not pleased with them; for, to my knowledge, a part of them are not surpassed by any seamen we have in the fleet; and I have yet to learn that the color of the skin, or the cut and trimmings of the coat, can affect a man's qualifications and usefulness."[32] Perry, however, had not only complained to Chauncey, but to others as well. Rumors of his loose talk had finally drifted back to Jones who severely rebuked the young officer's rash action.

> I regret to observe by a letter from Genl. Harrison, received yesterday at the Department of war, that he appears to be under the impression that you are destitute of qualified officers, and that your crews are composed of everything but seamen. If he has received this impression from you, I deem it extremely improper; and I am mortified that the idea has considerable currency. If the fact was really so, its existence was not to be made a matter of Public noteriety, to embolden the Enemy, and depress the confidence of the officers

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31. O. Perry to I. Chauncey, July 26, 1813, quoted in Mahan, War of 1812, II, 64. O. Perry to W. Jones, August 10, 1813, lrcm.

32. I. Chauncey to O. Perry, August 10, 1813, quoted in Mahan, War of 1812, II, 66.

> and men in their own powers. If you were yourself convinced of the fact, it was a proper ground of remonstrance to this Department, and would, even have been a justification on your part in declining to meet the enemy, until a remedy should have been applied.[33]

William Jones had an authoritarian flair which made him appear more stern than he actually was. He refused to grant any leeway to anyone where the navy was concerned. He realized that as disorganized as the Navy Department was, only one man could be in charge, and he was determined it would be he. All officers and men were expected to do their duty in an efficient and economical manner. Personnel quickly learned that Jones was the man in charge of operations and administration and that all proceedings must have his prior approval. He was directly concerned with all personnel matters as there was no separate staff to handle them. Officers and agents had to be disciplined, promotions made, favors granted, and volunteers recruited--all were the immediate concern of the Secretary of the Navy. That Jones was able to make such an unwieldy bureau function as an efficient department will always be a credit to his organizational abilities.

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33. W. Jones to O. Perry, August 18, 1813, lso.

CHAPTER VII

SHIPS

Ships, next to the men who manned them, were the most important item for which the Secretary of the Navy was responsible. Since it had lacked any coordinated planning, the United States Navy had grown haphazardly in the decade and a half since it was founded. The lack of systematic projection had made it practically impossible for the navy to keep adequate stores on hand for every ship. Furthermore, as each ship was unique, it could only refit in its home port. William Jones was responsible for inaugurating absolute standards to be used on all federal vessels. He accepted William Bainbridge's book of rules in which proportional dimensions were used to indicate permissible variations in altering the sparring of naval ships.[1]

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1. Hand-written copy of this guide is located in UCSC.

The naval commanders in charge of a part of the American coast were the persons responsible for all ships built within their respective areas. The Secretary of the Navy demanded that they keep a close watch over these vessels to insure that their builders were conforming to the uniform standards set by the department. In explicit terms, Jones wrote to Captains Bainbridge and Gordon, "Herewith you will receive the list of Dimensions of Masts, Spars, &c for the sloops of war building under your inspection, to which you will please call the builders strictly to adhere, as well as to the precise position of the centre of the masts, as designated in the draught in the Gun Deck line." In December of the same year he told Commodore Macdonough that he could build a squadron of fifteen galleys which were to have the same dimensions as those currently being built at Washington and Baltimore for the Chesapeake flotilla. These vessels, divided into two classes, and designed to be "the most perfect of their kind" were to be propelled by oars. George Harrison, the navy yard commandant at Philadelphia, was responsible for supervising the construction of the Franklin, one of the

United States' first ships-of-the-line. Because these were to be the flag ships of the navy, Jones demanded strict conformity to the vessels' approved plans. When Harrison asked if the masts on the Franklin could be shifted slightly, the Secretary responded negatively and then explained, "The dimensions given however will be adhered to because they are the result of the deliberate calculations of as judicious Officers as any in our service, and are those by which the Independence and the Washington are masted. It was necessary to establish a uniform system, and it is believed the proportions fixed upon are not essentially defective. Perhaps they may appear large compared with those of a British 74; but our ships are equal to the largest British 80 gun ships in tonnage and stability."[2]

Captain Jacob Jones, the commander of the Macedonian, wrote a letter to the Secretary proposing changes in the ship's rigging. The Secretary's intimate knowledge of ships is abundantly evident in his reply.

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2. W. Jones to W. Bainbridge, August 14, 1813; W. Jones to C. Gordon, August 15, 1813; W. Jones to T. Macdonough, December 7, 1813; lso. W. Jones to G. Harrison, October 10, 1814, lsc.

> Being without the dimensions I have no data on which to form an opinion, but my general impressions are against the extension, & that the system of masting in our service is carried to an extent not only injurious but hazardous in the extreme. The increase of masts necessarily induces an increase of iron ballast to preserve the stability, the effect of which may diminish instead of increasing the velosity [sic] , by producing a violent motion, no less destructive to the Hull masts & rigging than dangerous to the whole. I am aware that you propose a corresponding reduction of the topmasts. The consequence of these alterations will be an addition to the courses & cutting of the topsail rigging &c: I know not in what condition her standing rigging may be; whether the whole or any part may answer again, but in either case, the increasing of the masts will require, an entire new gang of rigging perhaps much inferior to the original.[3]

Yet Jones was not so conservative as to oppose all change. When a plan appeared to possess merit, he was willing to incorporate the innovations into a vessel. He agreed to Bainbridge's and Hull's suggestion to increase the length of the keel on the 74s from 150 to 155 feet and the breadth from 48 to 50 feet, although he feared the latter might cause problems. He told Bainbridge that, "You cannot be more desirous than I have been to increase the dimensions of the 74s not so much on account of defective proportions as a desire to make them superior to their class

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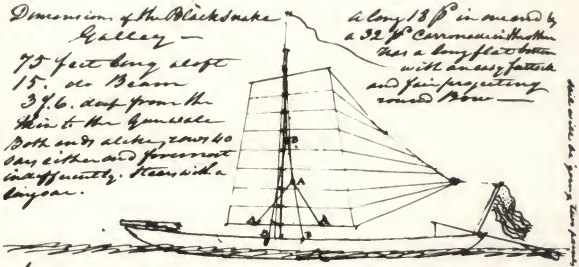
3. W. Jones to J. Jones, February 10, 1813, lso.

of the Enemy's ships." Bainbridge replied, "I shall proceed with the draught agreeably to your instructions, and shall not deviate in any degree without the specific instructions of your Department." Jones himself wanted to incorporate a radical change in the United States galley Blacksnake, a captured British sloop which was being rebuilt at the navy yard in Washington. In his private notes he made a sketch of a galley with a lug sail, similar to those he had seen on Chinese junks in the Orient (see following page). The Secretary described the possible advantages which could be produced by such a sail.

> When the sail is set it works itself by ever trimming the sheets to the wind, and as the sail does not swell but is a plane surface the angle at which the wind strikes and is reflected from the sail allows the vessel to sail two points nearer the wind, or what is equivalent when sailing at the useful angle with the wind, the vessel with this sail will be going two points free and thus around lee way. ... exclusion of its simplicity is the importance of this sail to long shallow flat vessels --than a swelling sail. Moreover in light winds ahead there is no occasion to lower the sail as it does not shake or obstruct the passage of the vessel but plays round the mast like a dogvane.
>
> The sail being supported by the stretchers and never shaking the canvass will wear perhaps three times as long without danger of splitting as in the ordinary way. The advantage of this sail is incalculable and I have long desired to introduce it in america [sic] particularly in our coasting and river craft. The Chinese use them of immense size made of a light matting for the junks of 1000 tons which trade to Java and the straits of malacca. [sic]

FIGURE III



In the seam of every cloth at every stretcher is to be a double eyelet hole to keep the sail to the stretchers with a nettle — there will be a very light broad hoop round the mast as a traveller for each stretcher. A is a span with a strap through a eyelet hole to suspend the Longing Boom on each side the mast head, to suspend the Longing Boom on each side the sail. B is a strong spreading whip to the Gunwale on each side — the Pendant of the rope the whip is to. The Halliards will be a tye block to work with the yard — the standing end of the tye round the mast head — the running part through a check block at the after part of the mast to run at the top of the mast, the tye block down along from the mast to a leading block forward and aft. The hoops will be hoyed to the stretchers so as to be readily cut off to disengage the sail from the mast when bowsed down. The Pattoes of the mast will be long and spiral so as to lower the mast down and when unstepped an Iron clamp or a strong eyelet hook to

JONES' DESIGN OF A LUG SAIL FOR THE BRIG, RATTLESNAKE

Source: Memo of W. Jones, July 12, 1813, UCSC.

No record exists whether such a sail was ever tried, but the negative evidence seems to indicate that here too, the Secretary's natural reluctance toward novel ideas of ship rigging prevented him from experimenting with it.[4]

Vessels were built or altered at the six navy yards. These government-owned yards, varying in size from 11 to 58 acres, were located at Charlestown, Massachusetts, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Brooklyn, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Gosport, Virginia. They had grown up out of necessity, not from express authority, from the act of February 25, 1799, which called for the building of six 74-gun ships.[5] Disabled naval captains were often called to command them. For example, Jones ordered Captain Samuel Evans, whose eyesight was failing from an old wound, to take command of the navy yard at Brooklyn "until your health is restored."[6] Most

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4. W. Jones to W. Bainbridge, April 28, 1813, lsc. W. Bainbridge to W. Jones, May 23, 1813, lrc. Memo of W. Jones, July 12, 1813, UCSC.

5. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 351.

6. W. Jones to S. Evans, May 6, 1813, lso.

of the young captains did not want a shore assignment. However, Captain Isaac Hull, the victorious commander of the Constitution, requested and received the Portsmouth Navy Yard because he desired to command the 74 (the Independence) which was to be built there.[7] Yet while little glory could be obtained from such a station, much money could be made; the commanders received a percentage of all the expenses paid out from a yard.

The duties of a navy yard commandant were many and his responsibility broad. Jones wrote to Captain Isaac Hull, "The entire Superintendence and controul of the Navy Yard and every thing attached to it is with you and I rely with perfect confidence upon your judicious arrangement and economical management to prove to the public that establishments of this nature are not necessarily scenes of extravagant waste and expenditure."[8] The commanders were expected to provide monthly statements of the quantity of supplies on hand. The commandants were responsible for a large amount of property. Besides the ships that were there for repairs or the vessels being built, an immense

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7. See Bruce Grant, Isaac Hull, Captain of Old Ironside (Chicago, 1947), p. 275 ff.

8. W. Jones to I. Hull, April 9, 1813, lsc.

number of supplies had to be kept on hand. The report to Congress of the amount of property lost at the burning of the Washington Navy Yard is a good indication of the wealth of stores kept at all the yards at this time. The report summed up the loss as follows:

Figate Columbia	$ 105,691.05
Sloop of war Argus	64,813.45
One large rowgalley	3,022.53
Two small rowgalley	5,277.20
One armed scow	654.45
One armed scow	509.60
Gunboats, rowboats, etc.	780.00
Boatbuilder's shop	2,962.98
Blacksmith's and plumber's shop	2,563.30
Cooper's shop	4,835.71
Gun carriage shop &c	525.00
Painter's shop	854.97
Blockmaker's shop	1,610.00
Medical store	2,679.84
Ordnance store, &c	18,769.90
Naval stores, cordage, &c	78,262.25
Copper, iron, lead, &c	7,442.87
Navy storekeeper's stores	17,509.88
Ordnance, small arms	10,358.75
Provisions and contingencies	42,890.60
Timber, plank, knees, &c	45,000.00
Miscellaneous articles	731.18
	$ 417,745.51 [9]

Not the least of the commandants' worries was labor. The workmen at all the yards never seemed to be satisfied.

9. ASP, Military Affairs, I, 533.

They did not petition for increased wages, but for more work. An unusual request was made by three shipwrights who asked the Navy Department to build a shed so that they could work indoors during inclement weather. Their petition was favorably received.[10]

Congress passed two acts early in 1813 which permitted the navy to increase substantially the size of its small fleet. The act of January 2, 1813, called for the President to build four ships-of-the-line rated at not less than 74 guns and six heavy frigates with at least 44 guns each, and to obtain the officers and men for manning these vessels. Congress also passed a bill on the same day which authorized the President to build six ships and gave him permission to dispose of as many of the gunboats as he saw fit. The bill, however, did not become law until March 3, 1813.[11] These statutes ordered a larger number of vessels than the six government yards could handle; and thus some of the contracts were given out to non-department ship yards. Howard I. Chapelle, the leading authority on the ships of the American sailing navy, severely criticized Jones and the administration for lack of foresight in distributing these contracts.

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10. W. Ivy, G. Piercy, & J. Cleary to W. Jones, March 10, 1813, lrm.

11. A/C, 13th Congress, 1st Session, XXV, 1315-1316, 1352.

> Because of the modest building program begun in 1813 the small construction organization was adequate, and the only weakness was the lack of supervision of contract builders by trained naval inspectors. As before, the building supervisors were usually commissioned officers. The general administration of the Navy was however, remarkably inefficient; the incompetent secretary and staff were still attempting to manage naval affairs on a political level without regard to the necessities of war. ... Once again most of the shipbuilding contracts were placed in a relatively confined area, with two vessels building at Washington, three at Baltimore, and one each at Philadelphia, New York, Newburyport, and Boston. Thus five of the vessels could have been kept from getting to sea by merely blockading the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, the others, with one exception, were in ports of such importance that their blockade was assured when the war began. The placing of the contracts seems to have been hurried, without any regard of the problems of getting the finished vessels to sea. There was still some idea that the government could build ships faster and more cheaply than private contractors.[12]

While Chapelle's facts in regard to where the ships were built and the manner in which the contracts were allocated are accurate, he misses several important points. First of all, while the Navy Department was inefficient due to its pre-professional organization, "incompetent" is too harsh a word to use to describe William Jones. The Secretary's managerial abilities had strengthened the department during

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12. Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, p. 278.

his term. Chapelle himself admits that under Jones, "In spite of an inadequate organization, the Navy Department had become somewhat more effective...."[13] The reason for this improvement was Jones' influence. He kept abreast of his work, taking care to see that all correspondence was properly and promptly handled. He rooted out the incompetents and replaced them with men who could do the job better and whom he could trust. He reorganized the department, making subordinate officers follow the chain-of-command and compelling senior personnel to accept his decisions. "Gradually, the power of the Secretary of the Navy over the commissioned officers in all matters became fully recognized and the Secretary had become the acknowledged commander of the service."[14] Jones led the way toward making the Navy Department into an effective government bureau. His success in doing so is proof that he handled the position with competence. Secondly, Chapelle fails to take into account the powerful relationship of politics to defense spending which was a factor in 1813 as it is today. The Secretary

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13. Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, p. 303.

14. Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, p. 303.

would hardly have been allowed to build these vessels in some insignificant port because those Congressmen who supported increased naval expenditures represented the nation's major cities. How naive Jones would have been if he had attempted to wrestle contracts away from their constituents. Simply because certain by-ways may have had easy access to the ocean, does not make it politically feasible to build ships there. Politics were intimately connected with naval building and they cannot, without distortion, be separated. Finally, he believed that the government could build ships more cheaply than private contractors. The department had 1,950 acres of timber resources on Grover's and Blackbeard's Islands and were receiving $200,000 more per annum to buy additional timber lands.[15] The administration had the equipment, the facilities, and the men under contract. The department knew that if these were not used, Congress would want to know why. No doubt this was not the best way to build ships, yet it met the system's demands, and it is a foolish man who attempts to change the system in the midst of a war, especially in a war which had already brought the navy so much glory.

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15. Goldsborough, United States Naval Chronicle, I, 351, 374.

Quite naturally the 74s became the pets of the Secretary. He not only closely watched their dimensions and materials, but even prescribed their armament.[16] Jones admitted his personal concern in a letter to Captain Hull, "I feel great responsibility in building those ships and wish to construct them of such materials and with such fidelity as to insure their durability and remove the prejudice which has taken such deep root in consequence of the enormous repairs and loss of time which has so seriously impaired the resources and efficiency to the Establishment."[17] Jones was disappointed when he realized that the 74s could never get to sea before the end of the war due to the financial problems which beset the administration. In April, 1814, he wrote to Hull:

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16. This was to consist of 86 guns. The lower battery was to have 30 guns weighing 60 to 62 cwt. The main deck had a battery of 30 guns of 54 to 55 cwt. The upper deck had 26 carronades. W. Jones to I. Hull, January 14, 1814, lsc.

17. W. Jones to I. Hull, August 10, 1813, lsc. Durable they were; the Independence was still in commission over 100 years later. See Homer C. Votaw, "The Independence, our first Ship-of-the-line," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXXIV (April, 1958), 152-154.

> I have to request that you will postpone any further contracts or purchases on that account until further orders as it has become necessary to reduce the expenditure as much as possible in the eastern section of the union owing to the fiscal operations of the government in that quarter and to the artificial obstruction to the credit and circulation of the paper of the government as well as of the Banks of the Middle States, and as the inconveniences attending the transmission of specie from the latter to the former to meet the expenditures in that quarter would not derive an equivalent advantage by the immediate preparation of all the equipment for the 74. A temporary suspension is deemed necessary until the current of exchange shall redeem its circulation. In the mean time you will progress with the finishings of the hull so as to get the ship afloat as soon as may be with advantage. You will complete the masts and spars and gun carriages and water casks and blocks.[18]

The Independence was the first 74 launched (June 22, 1814), but, as with the other two, it was not ready for sea until after the war had ended.

The most remarkable vessels were being constructed on the Great Lakes. On the northern frontier all building materials except lumber had to be brought in on a perilous overland journey. Because of the scarcity of skilled workmen, the artificers were more highly paid here than anywhere else in the nation. "Master shipbuilders ... received

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18. W. Jones to I. Hull, April 23, 1814, UCSC.

$2.50 a day, sawyers $1.25, and axmen $.625. If a man furnished horses or oxen he received $4. High wages for board at the taverns was only $2.25 a week."[19] The army's quartermaster department sent men north to help build the lake fleet, and after John Armstrong had been appointed Secretary of War, $10,000 of army money was furnished to aid the navy in building these vessels.[20] On June 12, 1813, Commodore Isaac Chauncey reported to Jones that the General Pike had been launched on Lake Ontario. The keel of this vessel had only been laid on April 9, 1813, and Chauncey said that the only thing which had prevented him from launching the ship in May was that he had to send 35 carpenters to Black Rock to outfit the five vessels there.[21] No vessel of this size was ever built in less time in the United States. The General Pike had a 140-foot deck, a 37-foot beam, and fourteen gunports on each side. Its armament of 34 guns had to be carried overland from the coast.[22] The British were keeping up with the Americans in the shipbuilding race on the Lakes. Just when one side

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19. Charles J. Dutton, Oliver Hazard Perry (New York, 1935), p. 63.

20. Marguerite M. McKee, "Service of Supply in the War of 1812," Quartermaster Review, VI (May, 1927), 35.

21. I. Chauncey to W. Jones, June 12, 1813, lrc.

22. Niles' Weekly Register, IV (August 7, 1813), 374.

would complete a vessel giving it naval superiority, the enemy would begin building an even more decisive ship. Neither side was ever satisfied and both used all the resources at their command to build a superior force on the Lakes. All in all, Britain and the United States faced the same problems in this area, i.e. an abundance of lumber and a lack of labor, and both achieved fleets with more similarities than differences.[23]

Besides building ships, the navy purchased many new or used vessels. With the pace of the war waxing, the department realized that large ships with massive gun power were no longer needed. The problem now was to get a vessel to sea through the British blockade, and the heavy frigates were no faster than their English peers. "Speed, the always debatable factor of naval warfare, was now the prime requirement, and particularly so in the small cruisers that had to expose themselves to an overpowering fleet at sea. The hit-and-run privateer schooners had at least taught the navy that speed in sailing meant survival when the odds were against them, or victory and the choice of position

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23. See Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, pp. 262 ff, 273; and Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, pp. 246-250.

when the odds were favorable or even."[24] Henry Adams called these schooners "the most conclusive triumph" achieved by the United States in the War of 1812.[25] The Secretary bought these swift fore-and-aft rigged vessels from whomever he could at a fair market price. Chandler Price, a very close friend from Philadelphia, asked the Secretary to help him get rid of his ship, the Neptune, for $20,000. Jones replied that the government would buy her for $13,500. "Do not let me press you," Jones wrote, "my object is to do justice to the public and give you an opportunity of selling a bad and expensive property these hard times."[26] The government got the vessel for its price and used it for sending dispatches and carrying diplomats. Its captain was Lloyd Jones--William's brother.

Schooners and 74s were not the only types of ships in which the Secretary showed interest. Jones had seen steam vessels operating as ferries along inlets in the east, and he encouraged Robert Fulton's experiments with this new mode

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24. Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, p. 292.

25. H. Adams, History of the United States, VII, 322.

26. W. Jones to C. Price, March 29, 1813, UCSC.

of propulsion. In July, 1813, the inventor suggested that submarine warfare would be an efficient way of destroying the enemy's vessels.[27] This, however, would have to wait until a later war to be tried. Fulton did launch a steam-powered monster boat, the Demologos (later renamed the Fulton), in October, 1814, but this was not tested until June 1, 1815. The news of the vessel, however, terrified the English populace who read the following fantastic description in an Edinburgh newspaper: "Her length on deck is 300 feet, thickness, 13 feet of alternate oak and planks and cork wood, carries 44 guns, 4 of which are 100-pounders, and further to annoy an enemy attempting to board, can discharge 100 gallons of boiling water a minute, and by mechanism, brandishes 300 cutlasses with the utmost regularity over the gunwales, works also an equal number of heavy iron pikes of great length, darting them from her sides with prodigious force and withdrawing them every quarter of a minute."[28] This steam frigate was nowhere nearly as fearsome as the paper had described it, and England swiftly built one to match it.

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27. R. Fulton to W. Jones, July 25, 1813, lrm.

28. Quoted in Coles, War of 1812, p. 94.

Fulton's main projects at this time were floating steam batteries which were designed to be used to guard some of the country's principal ports. He described these peculiar vessels in a letter to Jones stating that each battery would measure a "120 feet keel 138 on deck 55 feet Beam, that is, each Vessel, will be 20 feet beam and then must stand 15 feet apart to give space for the water wheel. This vessel will run four and one-half or five miles p. hour. Her Engine 130 horse power, the total expense about $200,000 completely equipped and armed, ... She will carry 24 long 32 pounders with Furnaces for red hot shott [sic] but cannot be made to draw less than 8 & 9 feet water. ... my conception is that she should be of force to contend with a seventy-four, and then although she cannot run into very shoal water, she can go for shelter into such waters where a seventy-four cannot approach her." The money to build such a vessel was hard to obtain. The government gave the chairman of a New York City committee, Henry Rutgers, $25,000 in treasury notes to build a floating steam battery. Fulton, however, was not satisfied, and he wrote to Madison asking for more money and expressing

confidence in the capabilities of the vessel, "although the secretary has been kind and attentive to this request yet I fear business pressing on him may cauce [sic] delays in finance retarding the work, and demonstration of the power of this new engine of war. Believing that you feel as I do towards this new work I may remark that one steam ship in the Potomac might probably have saved Washington by preventing the army calculating on the cooperation of the fleet." Madison did not answer Fulton and merely forwarded this letter to Jones who also failed to answer it. Once word of this new vessel got out, other ports wanted them for protection too. Jones told the citizens of Baltimore and Philadelphia late in November, 1814, that each port would have to raise $150,000 to be applied toward a floating steam battery for their city. By the end of his term in office, the floating steam battery had yet to be tested, but he was sanguine about the prospects to be gained from the use of such ships.

> A short time will probably test the efficacy of the principle at present the opinions of those who are best qualified to judge appear to be decidedly in favor of the utility and extraordinary efficiency of these vessels. If their opinions are

> found to be correct, it would be difficult to define the limits of the power which two hundred and fifty men would possess on board one of those vessels employed in harbor defence, and this economy in men is one of the most important features in the invention.[29]

Steam vessels were only one of the innovations in which Secretary Jones expressed an interest. Fulton proposed that the department employ torpedoes against the enemy. The "torpedoes" were explosive devices which had to be attached to the hull of a ship. A time fuse detonated them. To aid him in experimenting with these new instruments of war, Fulton asked Jones for a ship and several men since "You have here [New York] several fine ships which are idle and the Gun Boats have many men which do little."[30] Jones lent the inventor one of these vessels, and when the experiment proved worthwhile, the Secretary had several of the torpedoes manufactured at the Washington Navy Yard.[31] The United States, however, was never able to successfully employ these devices because of the copper plating on the enemy's hulls which made the attachment of the torpedoes impossible with the primitive drilling equipment the navy had. Other inventors also besieged Jones. An eighty-year-

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29. R. Fulton to W. Jones, March 19, 1814, lrm. W. Jones to H. Rutgers, July 1, 1814, lsm. R. Fulton to J. Madison, September 8, 1814, lrm. W. Jones to C. Tait, November 22, 1814, UCSC.

30. R. Fulton to W. Jones, April 27, 1813, lrm.

31. Paullin, "Naval Administration," p. 1321.

old man proposed that fish oil be placed on rivers and then burned when an enemy ship arrived. Jones ordered Captain Decatur to be present at the trial of this liquid, but apparently the experiment ended in failure as no further reports on it exist. The Secretary of the Navy encouraged Joseph G. Chambers' endeavors with multiple-repeating swivels (horizontally rotating, naval guns) and repeating muskets and pistols. Convinced of their usefulness, he looked for someone to make fifty swivels and 200 muskets. "I have from the first been confident of their utility & efficiency," he wrote, "and that opinion is corroborated by the judgment of our best officers, I wish also to bring them into use, in order that the merit of the inventor may be rewarded."[32] These weapons were successfully tried on board the vessels which composed the flotilla on the Delaware River.[33]

The Secretary himself was an amateur inventor. His most successful invention was the development of a method to seal gunpowder in lead cartridges. A paper on this

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32. J. Young to W. Jones, April 13, 1813, lrm. W. Jones to J. Chambers, May 7, 1813; W. Jones to G. Harrison, February 2, 1814; lsm.

33. Paullin, "Naval Administration," p. 1321.

subject was communicated to the American Philosophical Society before the war and a committee from that organization favorably reported on it in March, 1811, and recommended that copies of his report be sent to the Secretaries of War and the Navy. Jones was also one of the first to propose a uniform caliber gun. This would greatly facilitate the logistics of supplying ships since any gun of a certain caliber would fire the same size projectile. Up until this time, a ship's ordnance was peculiarly its own and each vessel had to have special shot to fit its weapons. Decius Wadsworth, the Comissary General of Ordnance, United States Army, saw Jones' specifications and wrote to him praising the idea.

> Your intention of arming the new 74s in such a way as to have all the cannon of one caliber, is so pleasing to me and so analogous in Principle to what I wish to see established in the Land Service, that I take the liberty of submitting a copy of a letter I had the honor to address to the present Secretary of State [James Monroe] then acting as Secretary of War, about a twelvemonth ago: this I do not merely to show a coincidence of opinion flattering to myself, but in order that the Benefit of your Advice and Influence may be experienced in operating some Reforms in the Artillery for Land Service; it being my opinion that the <u>Value and Importance of Simplicity and Uniformity in the Artillery</u> is not yet sufficiently understood among us.

While Jones would encourage experimentation, the government actually received little return on any of these inventions, since none of them had been perfected by the end of the war.[34]

Jones' interest in ships and navigational aids did not diminish after he had left the administration. He appears always to have been a tinkerer of sorts and later in life wrote two pamphlets on these subjects. Both were propagandistic pieces which attempted to stimulate federal interest toward helping Philadelphia's commerce. His Reflections upon the Perils and Difficulties of the Winter Navigation of the Delaware (Philadelphia, 1822) proposed a plan for the construction of a steam-propelled ice breaker to clear the Delaware River and Bay. A later work, Remarks on the Proposed Breakwater at Cape Henlopen (Philadelphia, 1825) called for a levee to protect the bay from the ravages of ice and high water. Both of these were published in conjunction with the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and are indications of the man's abiding interest in vessels and sailing.

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34. R. Paterson, et al. to W. Jones, March 22, 1811; D. Wadsworth to W. Jones, January 29, 1814; UCSC.

The government was to gain many benefits from the War of 1812 by having a Secretary of the Navy who knew ships and shipbuilding. Jones was able to prevent captains from altering their vessels from personal whim. He knew that most of these alterations did not improve a ship's sailing qualities, but that they actually hindered them. The Secretary read the proposals offered by some of the captains, but only agreed to those which would provide definite benefits to the department. The navy yards, under his supervision, built the United States' first ships-of-the-line and several heavy frigates. Meanwhile, on the northern frontier, the nation successfully built from scratch a Great Lakes flotilla in record time. Finally, Jones was always willing to listen to an inventor who was experimenting with a product in which the navy might have an interest. He did not merely dismiss them all as crackpots, but listened to their ideas. When these appeared feasible, he provided whatever help he could to see the inventions implemented.

CONCLUSION

On December 1, 1814, William Jones resigned his post as Secretary of the Navy. Twenty-three days later the war was over. Since that date an argument has been waged over what, if any, positive results the United States had gained from the contest. To be sure, the Indian menace had been broken on the frontiers and the nation had seized a part of the Floridas. On the other hand, Canada remained a menace to the north; the maritime rights of neutrals and the impressment question were still debated; and the United States lost some of its fishing privileges on the Grand Banks. Yet the nation had gained something far more important to itself. Through the successful naval engagements, the land victories at New Orleans and Baltimore, and the disastrous folly of the Hartford Convention, the people of the United States regained a spirit of patriotism they had formerly lost. The national self-confidence or pride was renewed, and from this date until the 1850's the states would work together in a spirit of amity unknown since

Washington's first administration. The astute financier and political observer, Albert Gallatin, was one contemporary who understood the essential meaning of the war and was able to express it.

> The war has been productive of evil and good, but I think the good preponderates. Independent of the loss of lives, & of the property of individuals, the war has laid the foundations of permanent taxes & military establishments, which the Republicans had deemed unfavorable to the happiness and free institutions of the country. But under our former system we were becoming too selfish, too much attached exclusively to the acquisition of wealth, above all, too much confined in our political feelings to local and state objects. The war has renewed and reinstated the national feeling and character which the Revolution had given, and which were daily lessening. The people now have more general objects of attachment, with which their pride & political opinions are connected. They are more Americans; they feel and act more as a nation; and I hope that the permanency of the Union is thereby better secured.[1]

The United States Navy had entered the war woefully unprepared. The lack of ships, materials, provisions, and seamen were material deficiencies which could be supplied in time. The Navy Department, however, had "to build from the ground up, securing materials and improvising equipment

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1. Quoted in Mahan, War of 1812, II,436.

that should have been ready long before the onset of the emergency."[2] The navy had two advantages in its favor at the beginning of the war. The first was its superior ships which the nation had built in the previous decades. Called "superfrigates" these large, strong vessels were an equal match for any ship the British navy could produce short of the 74-gun ships-of-the-line. So powerful were these American vessels that one British naval historian cried "foul" because they were used against lesser ships.[3] America's second, but more important, advantage was the high quality of her naval officers. These men had served in a fighting navy over a long period of time. They had participated in the Barbary Wars and the Quasi-war with France. Their victories in the War of 1812 proved their superiority over the officers of the world's most formidable navy. During peacetime many of them manned merchant vessels and thus maintained their naval competency. They had fought well in the Mediterranean under Commodore Edward Preble

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2. Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power, p. 77.

3. See William James, A Full and Correct Account of the Chief Naval Occurrences of the Late War Between Great Britain and the United States of America (London, 1817).

and were proud to be known as "Preble's Boys."[4] "By and large, they were decisive, resolute, and resourceful; they possessed an offensive spirit, and had a tremendous feeling of esprit de corps. These traits were of great value to the new Navy, particularly when its future role was in doubt."[5] The successes of these officers contributed to the legend that the United States had won the war. Yet while the single-ship battles brought much cause for rejoicing at home with gala balls in the crews' honor, "these naval duels secured no strategic advantage for the United States. On the contrary, every defeat seriously diminished the American Navy's slender resources, while the dozen or so victories had no material effect on the total strength of the enemy. And besides, the loss, or even temporary crippling of a single American cruiser seriously curtailed the work of commerce raiding which, under existing circumstances, was necessarily the most important function of a navy totally lacking in capital ships."[6]

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4. See Fletcher Pratt, Preble's Boys (New York, 1950).

5. Langley, Social Reform, pp. 8-9.

6. Sprout, Rise of American Naval Policy, p. 78.

As Secretary of the Navy, William Jones was influential in keeping the lines of men and materials open to his captains. True, many of the most dramatic victories of the war, the single-ship duels, occurred before he assumed this post, but other crucially important victories such as those on Lake Erie and Lake Champlain owed something to his administration. It is difficult, however, to estimate the man's importance. One thing is certain, no case can be made for Jones' directing the nation's naval strategy. He simply did not participate in the decisions which committed the country's resources to one place rather than another. Furthermore, there is no extant evidence that he ever tried to formulate strategy. Perhaps it was lucky for him that he did not, for unlike John Armstrong who was responsible for strategic decisions, Jones was never blamed for his failure to recognize that an attack on Washington was imminent. He realized that he lacked the competence to direct the nation's naval strategy and therefore avoided that task.

An extensive reading of Jones' public and private papers reveals him to be a person unconcerned with theoretical

problems and almost totally lacking in intellectual penetration. Perhaps these are reasons why he never wished to concern himself with strategic decisions. He was not a philosopher, but rather a craftsman who was capable of making hard decisions on immediate problems, and he would stick to his decisions until reason or experience proved him wrong. Lacking any sense of humor, he was grave, taciturn, and given to introspection. The nation had called him, and he was willing to be a part of the administration that was pursuing a policy in which he believed. Yet the entire time he was in office, Jones could never fully commit himself to his job. His private debts drained him spiritually as well as financially. Seeming to have learned from his own unfortunate experiences, he cautioned his subordinates to remain out of debt, to spend their resources frugally, and to shop around for the best bargains. The Secretary's thoughts were complicated and are difficult to follow today. His prose was verbose and full of opaque similes and metaphors which indicate a slow, methodical mind rather than quick perception. Much of his official correspondence

was written by departmental clerks from his notes. This must have made many of his more detailed thoughts appear laconic to the recipients. More important to the nation was his dedication and his strict honesty. While Jones' letters were often indirect, they were expressions of a candid commitment to the nation's best interests. He tried to devote himself fully to the war, and worried that he would be unable to perform the national trust with such competence that his personal honor would not be blemished. Jones watched over the nation's finances as if they were his own; he took others to task when they seemed less committed than he to the war effort. When it became apparent that he could no longer serve the national interests and at the same time care for his own, he resigned. He was a hard-working, dedicated administrator who was willing to sacrifice his own private interests for those of his nation until his own finances no longer permitted him to ignore them without losing that which he cherished most--personal honor.

The department which William Jones received was in all respects pre-professional. The Secretary was seen as the

head of the bureau and was entitled to seize whatever powers he could without incurring the ire of the naval officers. There was no organization and no chain-of-command which could have exerted uniform control. Each captain was highly individualistic and resented a civilian Secretary who might try to maintain tight control over his actions. The Secretary had no naval advisers but was expected to draw solely upon his own knowledge and competence to direct the navy. Under an inept Secretary, such a system could be disastrous. Fortunately, Jones had had experience as a ship captain and knew the peculiar sensitivity of the officers he directed. Most importantly, he had the respect of many of the senior captains from the beginning, and was able to maintain this respect through his administration. His knowledge of the world's commercial routes, of ships and shipbuilding, and of personnel management were important attributes in an organization such as the Navy Department. He was firm with officers and sailors. Subordinates were instructed to correspond with the Secretary only through their captains and the records of the captains were scrutinized to ascertain their ability. Jones would tolerate no

slovenliness and his most serious rebukes were reserved for the officers who lacked the spirit to stay at sea or who had been negligent about the care of government property. Many agents and pursers were forced to be more careful with their accounts while others were removed for incompetence or malfeasance. Jones' experience as a ship captain had convinced him that the only way to run an organization was to exert authority and to demand conformity. This he did as Secretary of the Navy.

Although the navy was always short of funds, Jones seemed to be able to find money somewhere to keep it operating. Shortly after assuming office, he told the Congress that the funds it had allotted for 1813 would be inadequate. While he would often complain later that he was short of money, he was always able to manage the department's accounts so that another ship could be built on the Lakes, or additional seamen could be enlisted. He even found money to experiment with a steam vessel. Wherever he could, the Secretary cut corners. The militarily impotent, but psychologically important gunboats were laid up in favor of larger vessels. Seaport dwellers were told to man these

vessels themselves if they wanted to have them cruising about a harbor. He refused to spend the department's funds in areas where he felt it would produce no compensating gain. In places where he knew the nation was committed, he approved spending far beyond what he had initially allowed. Commodore Chauncey was the chief beneficiary, but Captains Macdonough and Hull received far more than their share to build new vessels. Jones also knew how to manage men. He shifted entire crews, individual seamen, and groups of artificers to spots where they were needed--this was usually the Lakes, but it was also true at Washington and Baltimore. He had to deal with a few recalcitrant officers, but when he left the department, he was recognized by all, although still resented by some, as the commander of the bureau.

The affairs in the Department of the Navy took much of Jones' time. Because he was lacking in competent, professional aid, he had to concern himself with many minor questions that he could have avoided had he been provided with a staff of naval officers. He recognized this problem as the most serious one with which the Secretary of the Navy had to contend, and recommended that a professional

board of naval officers be created to advise the Secretary and to help him administer the navy. This was his most dramatic reform. It would be the prototype of the naval staff in the United States, and it staggers the imagination to estimate how any man was able to operate without one. In addition, he instituted a great many other departmental reforms. Everyone who handled funds or naval stores, agents, pursers, and warrant officers, was required to provide accurate monthly reports to the accountant's office in the Navy Department. Captains were no longer permitted to alter vessels at whim, but were required to have their ships conform to the strict geometrical standards compiled by Captain William Bainbridge. For the first time, a file was kept on all officers which provided some sort of elementary information on the capabilities of these men. In addition, warehouses were built in ports to supply ships returning from cruises; hospital facilities were improved by providing the chief surgeon with powers over the other naval physicians; and some shipbuilding contracts were let out to private firms where good vessels could be produced in less time and at a substantial savings.

Secretary of the Navy William Jones' role in the War of 1812 was an important one. He was no naval genius, but was a superb manager. As Secretary he was entrusted with running a large organization without adequate professional help. He was able to reform and strengthen the department while simultaneously and adequately managing its men and equipment. He organized the wagon trains which brought the necessary supplies to the Lakes, saw to it that important pieces of equipment where shifted from one port to another, and provided the stores to vessels anxiously waiting to get to sea from an unblockaded port. As an administrator, personnel director, and organizer, William Jones performed with superior competence. He was able to provide the logistical support to the national strategy wherever it was required. He managed a vast bureau alone and was an important element in the navy's excellent performance in the war. Jones' role was a crucial one, and as Secretary of the Navy, he turned out to be just what the nation needed during the war--a competent and conscientious administrator.

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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